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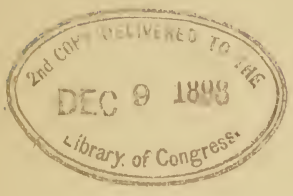

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MARIÆ COROLLA.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

PASSION FLOWERS. Poems by Father Edmund of the Heart of Mary, C.P. Bound uniform in style with "Mariæ Corolla." $1.25.

THE AUTHOR

AS A PAULIST MISSIONARY, IN HIS FIRST YEAR OF PRIESTHOOD.
1871.

MARIÆ COROLLA

A WREATH FOR OUR LADY

BY

FATHER EDMUND OF THE HEART OF MARY, C.P.
[BENJAMIN D. HILL]
Author of "Passion Flowers," "A Short Cut to the True Church," "The Voice of the Good Shepherd: Does It Live? And Where?"

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
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I am the Mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. ECCLUS. XXIV. 24.

All good things came to me together with her.

WISDOM, VII. 11.

PREFACE

1. In choosing the Latin title "Mariæ Corolla" for this second volume of my poems, I am thinking of a book called "Sabrinæ Corolla," with which are associated pleasant memories of my last school — Shrewsbury.

"Sabrina" is the classical name for the river Severn. Readers of Milton will at once remember that exquisite apostrophe in *Comus*, which invokes Sabrina as a goddess: —

> "Sabrina fair,
> Listen where thou art sitting
> Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
> In twisted braids of lilies knitting
> The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair!
> Listen for dear honor's sake,
> Goddess of the silver lake,
> Listen and save!"

"Sabrinæ Corolla" (*corolla* being a diminutive of *corona*) was a collection of some of the best verses by the pupils of Shrewsbury school:

verses both Latin and Greek, and all of them translations from passages of English verse. Among the most skilful contributors was one who afterwards became Head Master, and in whose Sixth Form I was privileged to sit — that brilliant scholar and perfect Christian gentleman, Dr. Benjamin Hall Kennedy.

2. In laying this wreath at the feet of Our Blessed Lady, I am well aware that it is very far indeed from deserving her gracious notice: but I am encouraged by the assurance that she deigns to accept even the poorest performance which is offered out of love.

With regard to the devotion manifested in these pages, I have no fear of any true Catholic misunderstanding it or calling it presumptuous. Some degree of devotion to the Blessed Virgin forms an integral part of the life of all faithful Catholics: and they know that, while admitted to a tender familiarity with her who is our *Mother* as well as our Queen, it is impossible for us to forget that she is God's Mother first, and Queen of angels and of saints. Then, again, they cannot blame me for upholding Our Lady

as a peerless *ideal* for that *chivalrous* love and service which is specially the privilege of men who are called to the priesthood or to the religious state, but is open to all Catholic manhood.

3. To my non-Catholic readers, on the other hand, I wish to show how reasonable a thing this devotion is, as ministering to a need in the human heart, which certainly ought to find satisfaction in a religion which claims to come from the God who made that heart, and who has taken it Himself. The poem "Stella Matutina: or, A Poet's Quest" is specially designed to make this clear. But it shall have a little preface of its own.

4. I remember hearing the remark, while I was still an Anglican, that converts to the faith of Rome are apt to become very fervent clients of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and even to go to excess in this devotion.

As to "going to excess," I deny that to be possible — within the lines of truth. But if converts *do* take such a hold on what has been

to them a "hidden treasure" for years, it is because they wish to make up for lost time — and also, perhaps, to atone for hard and mischievous things said against this devotion in their ignorant past.

I refer to the last chapter of my "Short Cut to the True Church" any reader who wishes to see how Our Lord has made Himself responsible for the position of His Blessed Mother in the religion of Catholics.

5. Let me add that the distinguished convert Mr. Orby Shipley, of London, has done me the honor to select some of the sonnets in this volume for his admirable "Carmina Mariana."

St. Mary's Retreat, Dunkirk, N.Y.
August, 1898.

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PART I

From 1868 to 1878

TO A FAVORITE MADONNA

LADY MARY, throne of grace,
Imaged with thy Child before me:
Softly beams the perfect face,
Fragrant breathes its pureness o'er me.

I but gaze, and all my soul
Thrills as with a taste of heaven:
Passion owns the sweet control;
Peace assures of sin forgiven.

Ah! then, what thy loveliness
Where it shines divinely real,
If its strength has such excess,
Feebly shadow'd in ideal!

In thine arms thy royal Son
Waits to fill us past our needing:
Hears for all, denied to none,
Thy resistless whisper pleading.

Dream, say they, for poet's eye?
Thou a dream! Then truth is seeming.
Only let me live and die
Safely lost in such a dreaming!
1868.

HER NATIVITY

"Orietur Stella ex Jacob." [1] — Numb. xxiv. 17.

STAR of the Morning, how still was thy shining
When its young splendor arose on the sea!
Only the angels, the secret divining,
Hailed the long-promised, the chosen, in thee.

Sad were the fallen, and vainly dissembled
Fears of the Woman in Eden foretold:
Darkly they guessed, as believing they trembled,
Who was the gem for the casket[2] of gold.

Tho' the deep heart of the nations forsaken
Beat with a sense of deliverance nigh;

[1] "A star shall rise out of Jacob."
[2] "Thou art the casket where the jewel lay." — George Herbert.

True to a hope, thro' the ages unshaken,
Looked for the "day-spring" to break "from on high";

Thee they perceived not, the pledge of redemption —
Hidden like thought, tho' no longer afar;
Not tho' the light of a peerless exemption
Beamed in thy rising, Immaculate Star!

All in the twilight so modestly shining
Dawned thy young beauty, sweet Star of the Sea!
Only the angels, the secret divining,
Hailed the elected, "the Virgin,"[1] in thee.

SUPER OMNES SPECIOSA[2]

IS any face that I have seen —
Some perfect type of girlhood's face?
Some nun's, soul-radiant, full of grace? —
Like thine, my beautiful, my Queen?

[1] Is. vii. 14. ἡ Παρθένος. — LXX.
[2] "Beautiful above all." — Antiphon.

Of all the eyes have paused on mine —
And these have met some wondrous eyes,
So large and deep, so chaste and wise —
Have any faintly imaged thine?

The chisel with the brush has vied
Till each seems victor in its turn;
And love is ever quick to learn,
Nor throws the proffer'd page aside:

Yet few the glimpses it has caught:
For thou transcendest all that art
Can show thee — even to the heart
Most skill'd to read the poet's thought.

That thought can pierce its native sky
Beyond the artist's starry guess:
But all that it may dare express
Is thro' the worship of a sigh.

To set the music of thy face
To earthly measure, were to give
Th' informing soul, and make it *live*
As there — God's uttermost of grace.

SANCTA MARIA

SWEET name of Mary, name of names,
save One —
And that, my Queen, so wedded unto thine
Our hearts hear both in either, and enshrine
Instinctively the Mother with the Son —
The lisping child's new accent has begun, [youth
Heaven-taught, with thee: first-fervent happy
Makes thee the watchword of its maiden truth;
Repentant age the hope of the undone.
To me, known late but timely, thou hast been
The noonday freshness of a wooded height;
A vale of soothing waters; the delight
Of fadeless verdure in a desert scene.
And when at last, my day shall set serene,
Be Hesper [1] to an eve without a night.

LILIUM INTER SPINAS [2]

O FOUND at last — and *not* too late!
O found, and never to be lost!
(Can death divide us at its gate?
Change blight us with its frost?)

[1] The evening star. [2] "A lily among thorns." — Cant. ii. 2.

O found at last, forgive, forgive,
This self-deceiving heart of mine,
That, knowing thee, it dared to live
For other love than thine!

Eve's fairest daughters share her doom,
Save thee, of sin, decay, and death:
Their beauty ripens for the tomb,
Or fleets too soon for breath.

And some may prove, that guileless are,
But sirens of a perilous flood:
While thou dost lead us, like a star,
Thro' pureness up to God.

O found at last — unhoped ideal!
Thy poet's heart *must* live in thee;
Or gasp and wither for the real,
And roam a shoreless sea!

1868.

CHRISTMAS

GOD an infant — born to-day!
Born to live, to die, for me!
Bow, my soul: adoring say,
"Lord, I live, I die, for Thee."
Humble then, but fearless, rise;
Seek the manger where He lies.

Tread with awe the solemn ground.
Tho' a stable mean and rude,
Wondering angels all around
Throng the seeming solitude:
Swelling anthems, as on high,
Hail a second Trinity.[1]

'Neath the cavern's[2] dim-lit shade
Meekly sleeps a tender form.
God on bed of straw is laid!
Breaths of cattle keep Him warm!
King of glory, can it be
Thou art thus for love of me?

[1] Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are called "the earthly Trinity."
[2] It was a cavern used for a stable.

Hail, my Jesus, Lord of might!
Here in tiny helpless hand
Thy creation's infinite
Holding like a grain of sand!
Hail, *my* Jesus — all my own:
Mine as if but mine alone!

Hail, my Lady, full of grace!
Maiden-Mother, hail to thee!
Poring on the radiant face,
Thine a voiceless ecstasy;
Yet, sweet Mother, let me dare
Join the homage of thy prayer.

Mother of God — O wondrous name!
Bending seraphs hail thee Queen.
Mother of God, yet still the same
Mary thou hast ever been:
Still so lowly, tho' so great —
Mortal, yet Immaculate!

Joseph, hail — of gentlest power!
Shadow of the Father[1] thou:
Thine to shield in danger's hour

[1] See Faber's *Bethlehem.*

Whom thy presence comforts now.
Mary trusts to thee her Child;
He His Mother undefiled.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, hail!
Saddest year its Christmas brings:
Comes the faith that cannot fail,
Come the shepherds and the kings:
Gold and myrrh and incense sweet
Come to worship at your feet.

ON A PICTURE OF NAZARETH

IN dreams no longer, but reveal'd to sight,
Comes o'er me, like a vision after death,
That shrine of tenderest worship, that delight
Of loftiest contemplation — Nazareth.

Fair-throned as when creation's King and Queen
Abode within its walls, it looks around
As scorning time and change; tho' these have been
The ruthless masters of its hallow'd ground.

Still smiling as of old, it catches still
As fresh a morning; basks in such a noon:
Hears evening's voice as sweetly, softly thrill;
In glory sleeps beneath a gushing moon.

Still looms the Mountain of Precipitation
In sadness o'er a vale serene and bright;
As when the Saviour foil'd His frenzied nation,
Who fain had cast Him headlong from the height.

And see upon the slope the very gate
Where — spot to kiss! — her lowly footstep fell,
As daily pass'd the Maid Immaculate
To fill her pitcher yonder at the well.

That well! where mirror'd shone the loveliest face
That ever woman wore! 'tis there — the same!
Tho' hating Christ and Juda's banish'd race,
The Moslems honor there the Virgin's name.

Give thanks, my soul: give thanks that thou hast seen.

Make Nazareth all a well of grace; and pray
To keep its taste within thee — which has been
The strength of saints. Drink deep: and go
thy way.

1870.

TAKEN IN

A FRAUD, an adventuress! Well?
And has *she* not a soul to be saved?
Or must we be wholly depraved
To be travelling straight for hell?

It will teach me a lesson, they say.
In what? In suspicion and doubt?
'Tis a lore I am better without
While mission'd to labor and pray.

They tell me the effort was wild.
Was it *all* such a bubble of gas —
From the daily "memento" at Mass
To the prayer of the innocent child?

Suppose her predestined? Why not?
No sign? There are many as hid.
Perhaps, what this simpleton did
Was a mesh in a merciful plot?

But enough: for I meant it for One
Who will pass even blunders above.
O Mother of pitying love,
Won't you claim this poor waif — for your Son?

1871.

SANCTA DEI GENITRIX

MOTHER of God! My Queen is simply this.
For this elected, the eternal Mind
Conceived her in its infinite abyss,
With the God-Man co-type of human kind.
And she, when came the wondrous hour assigned,
Conceiving her Conceiver, girt Him round,
And held in her Immaculate womb confined
Whom "heav'n and the heav'ns of heav'ns cannot bound." [1]
Then brought Him forth, her little one, her own;
And fed her suckling at her maiden breast —
The only pillow of His earthly rest,
And still for evermore His dearest throne.

[1] 2 Paral. ii. 6.

O Lady! what the worship Faith *allows?*
The Eternal calls thee Daughter, Mother,
Spouse!

SANCTA VIRGO VIRGINUM

THE Mother of all mothers, yet no less
The Virgin of all virgins! Yea, the more:
For 'tis from thy deific fruitfulness
Have drawn all virgins their perennial store.
Since virgin Eve grew mother of our loss
Virginity was barren — until thine,
Which bore the Fruit that in the press of the Cross
Redeem'd us with the virgin-making wine.[1]
And now virginity may wed thy Son,
Becoming thus the mother of fair deeds.
Still, after all the glories it has won
In following the Lamb where'er He leads,
How peerless thine in having drawn Him down
And brought Him forth — the virgin's Spouse and Crown!

[1] Zach. ix. 17.

MATER CHRISTI

MOTHER of Christ — then Mother of us all.
Mother of God made Man, of Man made God.[1]
The thornless garden, the immaculate sod,
Whence sprang the Adam that reversed the Fall.
Mother of Christ, the Body mystical —
Of us the members, as of Him the Head:
Of Him our life, the first-born from the dead; [2]
Of us baptized into His burial.[3]
Yes, Mother, we were truly born of thee
On Calvary's second Eden — thou its Eve:
Thy Dolors were our birth-pangs by the Tree
Whereon the second Adam died to live —
To live in us, thy promised seed to be,
Who then his death-wound to the snake didst give.

[1] "Deus factus est homo, ut homo fieret Deus." — St. Augustine. (God became man, that man might become God.)

[2] Col. i. 18.

[3] Rom. vi. 4.

OUR LADY'S EASTER

SHE knelt, expectant, thro' the night,
For He had promised. In her face
The pure soul beaming, full of grace,
But sorrow-tranced — a frozen light.

But ere her eastward lattice caught
The glimmer of the breaking day,
No more in Joseph's garden lay
The buried picture of her thought.

The seal'd stone shut a void, and lo —
The Mother and the Son had met!
For her a day should never set
Had burst upon the night of woe.

In sudden glory stood He there,
And gently raised her to His breast:
And on His Heart, in perfect rest,
She poured her own — a voiceless prayer.

Enough for her that He *has* died,
And lives, to die again no more:
The foe despoil'd, the combat o'er,
The Victor crowned and glorified.

DEVOTA [1]

SWEET image of the One I love,
To whom your infant years were given
(And still the faithful colors [2] prove
A constancy not all in heaven):

To me a violet near a brink,
Far-hidden from the beaten way,
And where but rarest flowerets drink
A freshness from the ripples' play.

A lily in a vale of rest,
And where the angels know a nook
But one shy form has ever prest —
A poet with a poet's book.

But poet's book has never said
What I, O lily, find in you:
'Twas never writ and never read,
Though always old and always new.

And ah, that you must change and go —
The violet fade, the lily die!

[1] A child of ten years and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

[2] Children thus dedicated have to wear white and blue for a specified time.

Let others joy to watch you grow;
Let others smile: so will not I.

Yet smile I should. Is heaven a dream?
In sooth he needs to be forgiven,
Who matches with the things that seem
A deathless flower, that blooms for heaven.

And while he mourns the onward years
That sweep you from the things that seem,
Let faith make sunshine on his tears: —
'Tis heaven is real, and earth the dream.

TO THE SAME

YOU little madonna, so very demure!
You draw me, yet awe me:
As warning, half scorning,
That kissing a face so religiously pure
Is almost a sacrilege, I may be sure.

Yet, awed as I am, I but love you the more.
You meet me and greet me
Serenely and queenly;

And image so sweetly the One I adore,
When she was a child in the ages of yore.

Her name it is Mary Regina — your own.
You share it and wear it
As flower its dower
Of fragrance — predestined hereafter, full-blown,
To reign with the lilies that circle her throne.

Be fragrant for me, then, O lily! and pray —
Each hour, little flower,
Exhaling availing
Petitions — to Mary the Queen of your May,
To breathe on my Autumn your freshness to-day.

A SOUTHERN FLOWER

A FLOWER of the pale, sad South,
Yet pale nor sad is she:
For she blooms on a wonderful tree
That knoweth nor blight nor drouth —
A certain miraculous tree
Our Lady has planted down South.

A rose let me call you, dear girl:
A fadeless and thornless rose.
So richly your modesty shows
Its blushes bejewell'd with pearl —
And a dew-drop of grace every pearl —
That I think of the Mystical Rose.

But the Lord of the sweet and the fair
(For they come from *His* beauty alone),
I pray Him that floweret so rare
No hand may dare cull but His own:
That no other bosom may wear
This rose of the South than His own.

OUR LADY'S COUNCIL

I

THERE came an hour and words [1] were utter'd then
That live to-day and echo evermore.

[1] St. Matt. xvi. 18.

One spoke them to a knot of simple men,
Who simply took the simple sense they bore:
A promise — such as never tongue or pen
Of sage oracular had made before;
And a design no wisdom could have plann'd,
Save His who holds the nations in His hand.

II

"Thou callest Me the Christ, the Son of God:
And blessèd art thou, Simon, son of John!
Thy knowledge cometh not of flesh and blood,
But 'tis My Father's gift to thee alone.
And I, a builder against wind and flood,
Say, thou art Peter — rock and corner-stone,
My second self.[1] Nor shall the gates of Hell
O'erthrow My Church thus wisely based and well."

III

Had less than God so spoken, he had been
The wildest of all dreamers. What! to make
A poor rude fisher — who had never seen
A gloom upon his Galilean lake,
But fear'd the menace of its boding mien —

[1] St. Augustine calls Saint Peter, Christ's "alter ego."

A rock no surge should whelm, no tempest
shake:
The baffled ages foaming at its feet
The broken malice of their ceaseless beat!

IV

God saith, and who shall gainsay? Devils first;
Then fools, their ready dupes. To these, forsooth,
Has seem'd it ever degradation's worst,
To own the gentle majesty of truth;
Since came the Church to free a world accurst,
And heal its heartache, and renew its youth:
A spring to thaw the universal frost —
Fire-dower'd from her natal Pentecost.

V

Error must needs inerrancy defy
That will not cede its dear delusions breath
(For how should truth be "liberal" to a lie,
Nor offer God an honorable death?):
And so along the ages rolls a cry —
The din of onset at the gates of faith:
'Tis Arius now, now Luther, heads the fray,
Or bristles up the hydra of to-day.

VI

And patient Rome sits victor over all:
Her strength in seeming feebleness increased.
She smiles to hear "the storm against the wall," [1]
And lavish'd names of "harlot" and of "beast,"
And prophets raving of her speedy fall:
While Satan counts his losses with at least
The joy that such solidity of rock
Draws none the fewer to the fatal shock.

VII

Press on, close in, ye gallant ranks of Hell!
Concéntrate still the might ye think to bow.
Stood ever holy Church, do records tell,
More one, more conscious, more herself, than now?
The Chair of Peter when belov'd so well?
Or when a Pontiff of serener brow?
He calls. Earth hears. Responsive from all lands,
Around its Chief a mitred army stands!

[1] Is. xxv. 4.

VIII

And they who trembled, and had been content
To scorn with quiet mirth a voice so weak,
Are forced, they find, to yield their panic vent.
"Another Trent!" rings out the indignant shriek:
"This nineteenth century, another Trent!"
'Tis not so sweet to have the Master speak
When passion, weary of His peaceful sway,
No longer deems it freedom to obey.

IX

But speak He will — the blessèd words of life.
How welcome to the soul that thirsts to know,
Or views alarm'd the too successful strife
Of earth with heaven — truth's ebb and error's flow!
We murmur thro' our tears, "Decay is rife!
The sound, the old, the sacred — all will go!"
Fond fear! Their doom let faithless thrones expect:
Christ's kingdom stands: He garners His elect.

X

The Serpent writhes (his last convulsions these)
Beneath the foot that tramples his crush'd head.
O Lady, worker of thy Son's decrees!
Thy Rome, thy Pontiff, trust thee. Deign to shed
Thy gracious light, lone Star of troubled seas,
At whose sweet ray the ancient darkness fled!
The Serpent writhes beneath thee. Deign to show
He is indeed the Woman's vanquish'd foe!

XI

Thy Pontiff trusts thee — most of Pontiffs thine.
For thee he calls this Council, in an hour
Momentous. He has taught us, at the shrine
Of thy Conception, that its peerless dower
Of grace preventive is a truth divine.
Put forth, O Queen, put forth thy royal power —
And with a splendor all the world may see —
To crown the Pontiff who has thus crown'd thee!

XII

This day we hail thy victory, and claim
Thy prayer omnipotent. Nor let it rise
For us alone, that boast to love thy name;
But those, unhappy, that have dar'd despise.
Who came for them, not less by *thee* He came:
Thro' *thee* must break unclouded on their eyes.
Ah, Mother's Heart! How long, then, wilt thou wait
Till *all* thy children sing "IMMACULATE"?

December 8, 1869.

AFTER THE COUNCIL[1]

I

WHAT say you? "Has the Definition cured
Credulity at last?" How so, old fellow?

[1] The following sarcastic letter may seem out of place in this volume. Indeed, I had intended giving it in the third. But it is so closely connected with "Our Lady's Council," that I think it will have more force if added here. It is written to an old schoolfellow, now an Anglican parson.

Your liver's out of sorts — your life's insured? —
  Or else your goggles have a tinge of yellow.
Or had the bowl too potently allured
  O'er-night, and left you the reverse of mellow?
For *something* was the matter when you wrote
The string of billingsgate I scorn to quote.

II

But come: I'll leave you room to make amends.
  For had the Council, yielding to the threats
Of foes or promises of falser friends,
  Left the great question open (there were bets
It would. You've lost? A circumstance which lends,
  No doubt, a bilious color to regrets) —
Then, I acknowledge freely, *then* my faith
Had suffer'd shock to the centre . . . all but death!

III

When "Thou art Kepha" said th' Almighty Word,
"And on this Kepha will I build My Church,"

What meant He? Peter's body and bones?
Absurd.
Then Peter's faith? If not, 'tis vain to
search.
But *how* the faith of Peter? We incurr'd
Together, once, the touch of Doctor Birch
Over a passage in our Greek *Delectus*
(That being judg'd the best way to correct us):

IV

And you'll deserve like castigation now
(And more than then, sir), if you fail to find
The answer to this very simple "How?"
But, first, of preconceptions clear your mind:
Next, light your pipe. 'Twill serve to smooth
your brow
('Tis well you're not of the non-smoking
kind),
And help you concentrate your mental action
On concrete fact and Protestant abstraction.

V

Ay, sapient tutors taught us to abstract
Peter's confession from the man that made
it:

As though the two were *not* one concrete fact —
Which *they* dissolv'd the better to evade it.
But let the rock-foundation rest intact
(" No work of flesh and blood: My Father laid it");
And ask, with me, What simpler, what completer?
Peter plus Faith — and not Faith minus Peter.

VI

Again, the superstructure to be rear'd —
"My Church" — What is it? Clearly, nothing crazy:
No city of vapor, such as hath appear'd
To learnèd heads with notions vague and hazy:
But something palpable; something to be near'd
By paths direct, and not by windings mazy;
Or if, at times, circuitously, still
By those alone who walk with a good will.

VII

Say a society, visible, organic —
Of teachers and of taught. An institution

Created to withstand assaults Titanic
As readily as onsets Liliputian.
Daughter of peace, yet ever causing panic.
"Not of this world," yet under contribution
Laying "all nations," in her Founder's name,
For unreserv'd submission to her claim.

VIII

Now, *such* a Church — remember, I'm explaining
My own belief, and must not snap my tether —
A kind of fabric is will need sustaining
By base right sure to hold it well together.
So, just to keep your faculties in training,
Please ponder deeply, and inform me, whether
This unity could balk its foes and weary 'em
Without the sovran central "Magisterium"?

IX

In briefer phrase, without the Chair of Peter —
Without what *you* call the *Un*-Holy See?
I said, just now, naught simpler, naught completer
Than this contrivance, as it seems to me.

And, in default of surer plan or neater,
The *fact*, I'm thinking, quite enough should be:
For stubborn fact it is. If you abhor it,
Then pray explode the words that answer for it.

X

Meanwhile, leave *me* to be at least consistent.
I take that promise as I find it spoken —
By One to whom no coming age was distant;
Who therefore meant it for a pledge and token
Of strength divine, invincibly resistant —
A rock should steadfastly throw back, baffled, broken,
The surging malice of all time. The tide
That whelms a continent — here turns, defied.

XI

But what hath all this with the Definition?
Why, everything, in short. Too fond your fear
That I should strain my powers of deglutition
Over a dogma luminously clear.

The Pope's prerogative, by our position,
Is not "*impeccability*," my dear;
But Peter's faith — the faith that cannot fail —
'Gainst which nor lie nor tyranny prevail.

XII

That Peter's faith lives on in Peter's See —
Believing, teaching, judging: — this the rock
Perpetual, whereon stands firm, for me,
The only Church may heed no skeptic's mock.
And therefore, had "the Vatican decree"
Not "thunder'd," *my* faith would have suffer'd shock;
Since Satan made, at head of ranks insurgent,
A call for fulmination — rather urgent.

THE BETTER CHRISTMAS

"'TIS not the feast that changes with the ever-changing times,
But these that lightly vote away the glories of the past —

The joys that dreamlike haunt me with the merry matin chimes
I loved so in my boyhood, and shall dote on to the last.

"There still is much of laughter, and a measure of old cheer: [yore:
The ivy wreaths, if scanty, are as verdant as of
And still the same kind greeting for the universal ear:
But, to me, for all their wishing, 'tis a 'merry' feast no more!"

I said: and came an answer from the stars to which I sighed —
Those stars that lit the vigil of the favored shepherd band.
And 'twas as if again the heavens opened deep and wide,
And the carol of the angel-choir new-flooded all the land.

"Good tidings still we bring to all who still have ears to hear;
To all who love His coming — the elect that cannot cease:

And louder rings our anthem to these watchers, year by year,
Its earnest of the perfect joy — the everlasting peace.

"Art thou, then, of these watchers, if thou canst not read the sign?
The world was at its darkest when the blessed Day-Star[1] shone:
Again 'tis blacker to her beam: and thou must needs repine,
And sicken so near sunrise for the moonlight that is gone!"

1874.

ORDINANDUS[2]

THE goal: and yet my heart is low,
When rather it should brim with glee!
They tell me this is ever so.
Ah, well! I cling to One I know:
Sweet Virgin, keep thou me.

[1] Our Lady.

[2] Just before ordination to the subdiaconate — the irrevocable step.

O thou for whom I venture all —
The fragile bark, the treacherous sea
(I needs must serve my Lady's call —
Her captive knight, her helpless thrall) —
My pilot, keep thou me.

From tyranny of idle fears,
And subtle frauds to make me flee —
Distorting unto eyes and ears
The burden of the coming years —
My mercy, keep thou me.

From shirking the accepted cross,
For all the galling that must be:
From seeing gold in what is dross,
And seeking gain in what is loss,
My wisdom, keep thou me.

From lures too strong for flesh and blood —
With show of ripe philosophy,
That points the fallen, who had stood
Contented with the lesser good —
My victory, keep thou me.

O Lady dear, in weal, in woe,
Till heaven reveal thy Son and thee,

Thy true love's mantle round me throw:
And tenderly, calmly, sweetly so,
My glory, keep thou me.

Advent, 1870.

TO SAINT JOSEPH

ON THE DAY OF MY FIRST MASS

TYPE of the priesthood with its Virgin Spouse,
The Immaculate Church, our Mother ever fair!
Since even to me God's wondrous grace allows
An office more than seraphim may share,
I kneel to thee, most gentle Saint, and dare
To choose thee patron of the trust. O make
My evermore fidelity thy care,
And keep me Mary's — for her own sweet sake!
Her knight before, and poet, now her priest
(Nor less her slave:[1] a thousandfold the more),

[1] The Ven. Grignon De Montfort called his devotion the "*Slavery* of Jesus in Mary," and himself the "slave, or bonds-

I glory in a bondage but increased,
And kiss the chain her dear De Montfort wore,
With "Omnia Per Mariam" mottoed o'er,
Which seals me her apostle — tho' the least.

FEAST OF THE SEVEN DOLORS,
March 31, 1871.

HOLY THURSDAY LADY-DAY

"TO find, this greatest day of all the year,
Our Lady's Mass and Office set aside!
My day of days — when holy Church, my bride,
Gave me her hand; her angel[1] in mine ear
Announcing words of thrilling joy and fear —
'Thou art a priest for ever:' — to be denied" . . .
But, suddenly, my Queen herself replied
(I stood at the altar, and 'twas sweet to hear):

man, of Mary for Jesus." Of course by "her priest" I mean her servant in the priesthood.

[1] The bishop (Apoc. chap. 2).

" The words 'tis thine to utter — making bread
The Body of thy Lord, and wine His Blood —
What do they but effect the wondrous end
Of mine this day to Gabriel's 'Ave' said?[1]
Behold His wish to be His dear ones' Food
On thy voice now, as then on mine, depend!"

March 25, 1875.

A PETITION

HOW bold I grow in this new love,
To ask thy Heart, that I may rest
Where thy Creator-Spouse, the Dove,
Has made His dearest, sweetest nest!

Full wise I ask it. Have I turn'd
Elsewhere, 'tis only not in vain
Because a lesson I have learn'd
Which needs not to be taught again:

That other *home* is none for me.
Tho' many a gentle heart might prove

[1] "Ecce ancilla Domini," etc.

An isle to touch at on the sea,
My bark were portless should I rove.

Then let thy bosom be my home.
And am I bold? 'Tis mine by right!
Thy Son, my Brother, bids me come
And dwell with Him there day and night.

LAST FIRST

AH, had I never lov'd but thee —
To thee my first, my only vow!
Tho' thou dost seem content to be
My Dearest, my Belovèd, now.

O darkness of the wasted years,
When to invoke thy blessèd name
Was theme for school-boy scoffs and jeers!
For mine the loss — if not the blame.

I feel (unless too fondly sure)
That, had I known thee from a child,
Thy face had kept me true and pure,
Since first it look'd at me and smiled.

My eager soul "must needs have loved"
So fair a "highest," had it "seen": [1]
And time had made thee, as it moved,
From boyhood's Mother manhood's Queen.

Yet can I murmur? Like thy Son,
'Tis thine, O Love, to glory more
In some frail, wounded, rescued *one*,
Than nine-and-ninety safe before.

Thou hold'st me dearer for that past
Where thou didst seek me at my worst:
And knowest that, if lov'd the last,
My last is *best* — and best is first.

TO BE FORGIVEN

I CALL thee "Love" — "my sweet, my dearest Love":
Nor feel it bold, nor fear it a deceit.
Yet I forget not, that in realms above,
The thrones of seraphs are beneath thy feet.

[1] "We needs must love the highest when we see it." — Tennyson.

If Queen of angels thou, of hearts no less:
And so of mine — a poet's, which must needs
Adore to all melodious excess
What cannot sate the rapture that it feeds.

And then thou art my Mother: God's, yet mine!
Of mothers, as of virgins, first and best:
And I as tenderly, intimately thine
As He, my Brother, carried at the breast.

My Mother! 'tis enough. If mine the right
To call thee this, much more to muse and sigh
All other honeyed names. A slave, I might —
A son, I must. And both of these am I.

REQUIES MEA

KEEP me, sweet Love! Thy keeping is my rest.
Not safer feels the eaglet from beneath
The wings that roof the inaccessible nest,
Than I when thou art near me, dearest, best —

Whose love my life is, yea, my very breath!
Thy Son to Egypt fled to prove our faith.
Not Herod's men had snatch'd Him from *thy* breast,
Or changed His thronèd slumber into death.
How wonderful thy keeping, mighty Queen!
So close, so tender: and as if thine eyes
Had only me to watch, thine arm to screen;
And this inconstant heart were such a prize!
And thou, the while, in beatific skies,
Art reigning imperturbably serene!

NON TIMEBIS A TIMORE NOCTURNO [1]

O LOVE, I pray thee guard my bed:
And evermore, when I recline,
From thy sweet picture at its head
There falls a pureness which is thine.

I feel thy shadow, and am blest:
I know I shall not be defiled.

[1] Ps. xc. Office of Compline. "Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night."

And oh, at times I seem to rest
On thy own bosom — like a child!

If break my slumber, straight to thee
My thought, in loving murmurs, flies —
As thou wert bending over me:
And scarcely would thy face surprise.

And should I die, what sweeter death?
To dream my spirit out of night —
Thy whisper for the morning's breath,
Thy smile to wake me into light!

UNDER A CLOUD

AH, Belovèd, thou canst never
See me wounded and defiled,
When thy pity's least endeavor
Needs must save thy foolish child!

But for thee how vain my toiling!
All is weakness — vileness all.
Tyrant self the gain despoiling:
Fresh the trial, fresh the fall.

Give me, then, to feel thee near me
When I tremble in eclipse:
Make me sure thou still dost hear me
When the dry heart mocks the lips.

Love me, love me, dearest Mother!
"Better is thy love than wine."
What to me were any other,
If I knew I had not thine?

SPES AGONIZANTIUM

THOU wilt come to me in death —
Come and take me to thy Son?
Come before my fitful breath
Passes and the strife is done?

When returning fears increase;
When the past eclipses heaven;
Thou wilt come and whisper peace —
Tell me it is all forgiven?

Thou wilt lend thy beauty's light
When my darkness seeks thy face?

Beam, and let my failing sight
Hail thee present "full of grace"?

When the swimming world is gone,
When that other life is mine,
Thou wilt take me to thy Son?
He will judge me but as thine?

Such my trust. O sweet my Love,
Who has trusted thee and wept?
Choose one more, then — just to prove
How thy promises are kept.

PER VINCULA LIBER[1]

LADY, my mercy! what the prize
You saw in me I cannot think,
What time you "turn'd those pitying eyes"
And snatch'd me from perdition's brink.

I call'd you not, that you should pray;
Nor knew you: yet the grace was won.
You took, unask'd, your own sweet way
To bring me captive to your Son.

[1] "By bondage free."

And now in Him I live anew:
With His dear gifts my soul is fair:
From His Heart comes its love of you,
His breath the fragrance of its prayer.

Yet, Lady, tho' I dare not doubt
('Twere sin) your goodness or your power,
I dread, and more than foes without,
This self — sure traitor every hour.

My peace that I must needs trust you,
My safety that you trust not me.
Be tyrannous — to keep me true:
Load me with chains — to make me free.

O VALDE DECORA![1]

COULD I but see thee, dear my Love!
That face — but once! Not dazzling bright:
Not as the blest above
Behold it in God's light:

[1] "O exceedingly beautiful!" — Antiphon.

But as it look'd at La Salette;
Or when, in Pyrenean wild,
It beamed on Bernadette,
The favor'd peasant child.

Once seen — a moment — it would blind
These eyes to beauty less than thine:
And where could poet find
Such theme for song as mine?

But if I ask what may not be,
So spell me with thy pictur'd face,
That haunting looks from thee
May hold me like a grace.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

ALONE with Nature, in a round
Of beauty 'neath a cloudless blue,
To drink each spell of sight and sound,
For ever old, for ever new;

Or, dreaming with the dreaming lake,
That lovelier seems with every hour,

To muse the noon out, half-awake,
In shade of tent or leafy bower:

All this had been in other years
A joy as sweet and pure as now;
Had moved, perhaps, forgotten tears,
A fresher heart, a blither brow.

Yet base were I to wish it back —
That time the poet can recall
As Eden lost. The scene would lack
A dearer charm, the queen of all.

The lake would own no Lady then:
Or if a mortal reign'd within,
What spoke of *her* would bid me ken
The winter of the once hath been.

But now, O Love, 'tis *thou* art here —
Within, and so without. To me
In Nature's glories thine appear:
For God has made His world for thee.

Lake George, August, 1871.

NEVERMORE

I WATCHED, from the lake, love's planet set
Toward the mountain's ebon bar.
I said: "This hour the eyes are wet
That bid adieu to *their* love's star.

"It rose so fair, and shone so bright,
A twilight spell — how swiftly o'er!
For change the cloud, or death the night,
That draws the murmur'd 'Nevermore'!"

But thou, thy poet's Star of love,
Madonna! if these eyes are wet,
Which hail thee beautiful above,
'Tis not that *thou* must pale and set.

'Tis joy that overflows in tears
From out a heart at perfect rest:
With thee to rule my rescued years,
O when was bard so deeply blest?

Ah, keep me true, my dearest Queen!
That I may sing, as none before,
The sweetest love hath ever been,
A star that setteth — nevermore.

LAKE GEORGE, August, 1871.

PULCHRA UT LUNA[1]

THE moon, behind her pilot-star,
Came up in orbèd gold;
And slowly near'd a fleecy bar
O'erfloating lone and cold.

I looked again and saw an isle
Of amber on the blue:
So changed the cloudlet by the smile
That softly lit it through.

Another look, the isle was gone —
As tho' dissolved away.
And could it be so warmly shone
That chaste and tender ray?

I said: "O star, the Faith art thou
That brought my life its Queen —
In her sweet light no longer now
The vapor it has been.

"Shine on, my Queen: and so possess
My being to its core,

[1] "Fair as the moon." — Cant. vi. 9.

That self may show from less to less,
Thy love from more to more."

A touch of the oars, and on we slid
My cedar boat and I.
The dreaming water faintly chid
Our rudeness with a sigh.

LAKE GEORGE, September, 1873.

HER LOVE

'TIS round me with the air I breathe,
And o'er me like the heaven above,
And steadfast as the earth beneath —
The mystery of Mary's love!

Chaste love — the truest, tenderest all
Of mother, sister, spouse in one:
My strength in trial and in fall,
My glory when the strife is done:

Chaste fire, consume my life away!
Burn out this self, this sensual dross,
That clings to pleasures of a day,
And hankers for the gain of loss!

ASSUMPTA

I

"AND didst thou die, dear Mother of our Life?
Sin had no part in thee: then how should death?
Methinks, if aught the great tradition saith
Could wake in loving hearts a moment's strife"
(I said — my own with her new image rife),
"'Twere this." And yet 'tis certain, next to faith,
Thou didst lie down to render up thy breath;
Tho' after the Seventh Sword no meaner knife
Could pierce that bosom. No, nor did. No sting
Of pain was there, but only joy. The love
So long thy life ecstatic, and restrained
From setting free thy soul, now gave it wing:
Thy body, soon to reign with it above,
Radiant and fragrant, as in trance, remained.

II

Yes, Mother of God, tho' thou didst stoop to die,
Death could not mar thy beauty. On thy face

Nor time nor grief had wrinkle left or trace:
It had but aged in God-like majesty:
Mature, yet, save the mother in thine eye,
As maiden-fresh, as when, of all our race,
Thou, first and last, wast greeted "full of grace" —
Ere thrice five years had worshipt and gone by.
Mortal thy body: yet it could not know
Mortality's decay. Like sinless Eve's,
It waited but the change on Thabor shown.
And when, at thy sweet will, 'twas first laid low,
Untainted as a lily's folded leaves
It slept — the angels watching by the stone.

III

"At thy sweet will." Then wherefore didst thou will
To pass death's portal? To the outward ear
There comes no answer; but the heart can hear.
Thy Son had passed it. Thou upon "the hill
Of scorn" hadst stood beside the Cross; and still
Wouldst "follow the Lamb where'er He went." Of fear

Thou knewest naught. The cup's last drop, so dear
To Him, thy love must share — or miss its fill.
But more. Thy other children — even we —
Must enter life thro' death. And couldst thou brook
To watch our terrors at the dark unknown,
Powerless to stay us with a sympathy
Better than any tender word or look —
Bidding our steps tread firmly in thine own?

THE THREE EDENS

"Ascende, Domine, in requiem tuam:
Tu et Arca sanctificationis tuæ." — Ps. cxxxi.

BLOOM'D the first Eden not with Man alone,
But Woman, equal Woman, at his side:
And seemly was it when, together tried,
They fell together — for the two were one.
On Calvary stood the Mother by the Son:
New Eve with second Adam crucified:
And as thro' Eve in Adam we had died,

Thro' Mary was our loss, in Christ, undone.
Then how should not the Paradise regained
  Behold its Eve beside her Adam throned:
Both risen, both ascended — unprofaned
  Each virginal body, by the grave disowned?
Else had our Foe his conquest half maintained:
  The primal ruin been but half atoned.

Feast of the Assumption, 1874.

SECOND EVE

PREDESTINED second Eve. For this conceived
  Immaculate — not lower than the first.
  Chosen beginner in the loss reversed,
And mediatress in the gain achieved,
When the new angel, as the old, believed
  Thy hearkening should bless whom Eve's had curst.
  And therefore we, whose bondage thou hast burst,
Grateful for our inheritance retrieved,
Must deem this jewel in thy diadem

The brightest: hailing thee alone "All Fair"
Nor ever soil'd with the original stain.
Alone, save Him whose Heart-blood bought the gem
With peerless grace preventive none might share —
Redemption's perfect end, all else tho' vain.

IDEAL — REAL

SOLE rest, of womankind, for hearts that crave
Immaculate perfection! Only shrine
For love that is religion — this of mine!
No Casta Diva Rome or Hellas gave
To school-boy years (so prone to dream and rave),
No form ideal I was wont to pine
At finding not, nor mortal deem'd divine,
Could sate my heart — which, hungry as the grave,
Made dust of all it gorged. I knew not thee.
A barren creed had starved me. With the hour

That brought me faith's realities, arose
The One mine eyes were purified to see:
And wiser manhood built itself a bower —
A temple of all musical repose.

INVIOLATA

"WHO hast alone Inviolate remained,"[1]
Sings holy Church. And I too, Lady sweet,
Can find no word to murmur at thy feet
Melodious as this — which thou hast deigned
To hear so often from a love unfeigned.
Ah, could my heart the tender thought repeat —
Inviolata — with its every beat,
And pour a ceaseless worship unrestrained!
Inviolate soul, inviolate body, thine —
Sin could not touch thee, nor the Tempter near:
Pain no disease, and age no blemish gave:
More virgin for thy Motherhood divine:

[1] "Quæ sola inviolata permansisti." — Antiphon.

Serene, sublime, 'mid sorrows without peer:
Beauteous in death, untainted in the grave.

IMMACULATA

IMMACULATE! The very word
Was made for thee, God's peerless love!
The one low note by angels heard,
As o'er thee hung the brooding Dove,

In that still moment when thy soul
Became its generate body's form;
And from the Cross to grace it stole
A ruddy gleam Redemption-warm.

December 8, 1875.

TOTA PULCHRA[1]

CAN God so woo us, nor, of all our race,
Have form'd one creature for His perfect rest?
Must the Dove moan for an inviolate nest,

[1] Cant. iv. 7.

Nor find it ev'n in thee, O "full of grace" —
In thee, His Spouse? Or could the Word debase
His Godhead's pureness when He fill'd thy breast,
Tho' Moses treasured up, at His behest,
The typical Manna in a golden [1] vase?

Who teach that sin had ever aught in thee,
Utter a thought the demons may not share —
Not tho' they prompt it in their fell despair:
For these, while sullenly hating the decree
That shaped thee forth Immaculate, "All Fair,"
Adore it still — and must eternally.

A LESSON

I FEEL so helpless, Lady, for the good
Thou settest me to do: so slight and faint.
All for not standing where I might have stood
By this time — on the pathway of the saint.

[1] Ex. xvi. 33; Heb. ix. 4.

How we forget that we are not our own!
Not ours the right to throw an hour away:
No, nor a moment: nor to let alone
One good work offer'd in a crowded day.

For God may want the merit of a deed,
To grant a grace, or turn a mercy's scale:
And when to *us* this honor comes decreed,
What shall we answer if His purpose fail?

For this, then, thou dost set me what demands
A saint? I thank thee. Yet I dare assign
One other cause. So weak *my* lifted hands,
I the more passive instrument in *thine.*

ANOTHER

WITH a pang like the pang of despair
For one who will soon be dead —
Soon lost to the vain, vain prayer
Of a heart that has ached and bled —
I turn'd from the foot of the stair
You were calmly ascending, and fled —
Ay, fled — to the blessèd May air
And the evening peace o'erhead.

And methought, as I gazed at the West
Yet aglow in its sunset pride,
"How narrow this grief, this unrest!
Yon heavens look scornfully wide.
Why rack any longer my breast
For a conquest to angels denied?
And must not the Good — yea, the Best —
Still triumph, whatever betide?"

But here something came from the skies:
'Twas the voice of One near tho' unseen:
And I felt the reproach of those eyes
Bending o'er me their tender serene.
"For myself was I chasing the prize?
Or for her — as a knight for his Queen?
And if *she* tired of wills that despise,
Where should *I*, pardon'd rebel, have been?"

A TRUANT'S RETURN

"ABIDE with me!" "I need thee every hour!"
As other hearts have murmur'd to thy Son,
So mine to thee, dear Mother of my soul!

I faint from battle. Thou must take control.
Give me thy arm, thy Heart, to lean upon —
My refuge from the Tempter's cruel power!

Wounded I moan'd to her; and not in vain.
But she made answer: "Why didst *thou* leave *me?*
Didst think I cared so little for thy love
To see withdrawn *one* token, and approve?
I counted it desertion, tho' to thee
It seem'd thy right." "My Queen, 'tis thine again!"

MAY

THE month of Maia — Cýbele's Roman name —
Ere Rome was Christ's.[1] And 'twas for Vulcan's priest
To kindle at her shrine the rosy flame
On sweet May-day. Womb'd in the fruitful East,

[1] Maia, or Majesta, was one of the names of Cybele. (Not to be confounded with Maia, the mother of Hercules.)

Not vainly Westward, as the myths increased,
This purer rite, nor unprophetic, came:
A flower that should be gather'd for the feast
Of Truth, with more that erst deck'd Pagan shame.

No fabled mother of vain gods we pray,[1]
But our Emmanuel's Mother — sinless Maid.[2]
To her we give, with hymns and posies gay,
This fairest month — our hearts on her altar laid,
That love of her, like touch of chastest fire,
May purge them from the dross of low desire.

THE ESPOUSALS OF OUR LADY[3]

[Scene. — *Before the Temple steps, as in celebrated picture.*]

ST. JOSEPH

(Awaiting the arrival of the Blessed Virgin:)

FROM boyhood up I had but one desire:
To live alone with God — as much alone
As wholesome concourse with my fellow-men,

[1] Cybele was the "mater deûm" of the Greeks and Romans.
[2] Mother of Emmanuel, therefore Mother of God. The Second *Person* of the Trinity is her Son.
[3] Written for a Sunday-school celebration.

And scope of humble traffic, would allow:
Not sullenly churlish: with a helping hand
For others' need — but peacefully obscure.
And so, when came the glow of youth, and thoughts
Of woman's love dawn'd roseate, I upraised
My heart to Him who was indeed to me
The Good Supreme, the Beauty Infinite;
And made, at once, a vow perpetual
Of perfect chastity: and straightway knew
'Twas He had drawn me to it.
Strangely, then,
Sounded the high priest's message, summoning
The unwed of David's lineage, who had claim,
By sacred right of kinship, to espouse
Its sole surviving maiden — bidding them
Bring each a wand, whereby the Lord might show
Whom He had chosen — and among them me,
Nearest of kin, but trusting to lie hid,
Half-way in the fifth decade of my years.
Yet, ever wont to obey the voice divine,
Within heard or without, I came, and stood
Unseemly 'mid the suitors. Then the wands
Were laid upon the altar — the high priest

Seeking the sign to Moses given of yore,
When in the wilderness the tribes rebell'd
'Gainst privileged Aaron. So we knelt, and went,
And waited on the Lord.
And I that night,
Like Joseph, son of Jacob, dream'd a dream: —
I saw a maiden, robed in purest white,
Sit throned where once, in Solomon's vanished fane,
Reposed the Ark, beneath the Mercy-seat,
Within the holy of holies. While I gazed,
Behold, a sudden vista of long light
Opened as into heaven, and swiftly a dove
Descended on the maid, yet settled not,
But o'er her head hung brooding! Then a voice
Said softly: "Fear not, Joseph, for thy vow.
Bride of the Dove is she; and thou, her spouse,
Shalt guard her for her Spouse." Whereat I woke,
Astonished: and to find upon the morrow,
That one of the rods had budded in the night —
Budded and blossom'd; and that rod was mine!

[*Sings:*]

Though the dream brought me peace, there is mystery still:
But in time He will solve it, the Lord of my love.
'Tis enough that I know I am wedding His will—
Beheld in this maiden, the "Bride of the Dove."

Ah, who can she be—there enthroned as a bride
Where the Ark of the Covenant rested of old?
Is it she for whose advent our fathers have sigh'd—
The long-promised Virgin the prophet foretold?

And what was the Dove? When the voice said "her Spouse,"
Did it mean that Jehovah had seal'd her His own?
Has she too, like me, made the sweetest of vows—
To live evermore for divine love alone?

But she comes: and I feel that the angels are here.
Their charge to be mine! They will share it, then, still.
And the dear God Himself, was He ever so near?
Be at peace, O my soul! Thou art wedding His will.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

[*Entering, with attendant maidens, sings:*]

MY God, to Thee I bow:
Thy will is ever mine.
Thy grace inspired the vow
That made me wholly Thine.

If Thou dost bid me wed,
Thou canst but guide aright.
I follow, darkly led,
Till break the perfect light.

I take my chosen lord,
And plight him troth for Thee.
So find Thy sovran word
Its Handmaid still in me!

CHORUS OF ANGELS

[*After the Spousal-rite has been ratified by the high priest:*]

ALL hail, blest pair, all hail!
As yet ye little know
What words that cannot fail
To after times will show.

Not angel eyes command
The glorious lot that waits
As meekly, hand in hand,
Ye leave the Temple's gates.

ON THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION

HAPPY those turtle-doves that went, my Queen,
With you to the Temple — tho' to death they went.
Could they have known, they had been full content
To give their little lives. And well I ween

Your pitying hand caress'd them; and between
The turns you took with Joseph (favor'd Saint!)
At carrying Jesus, you would soothe their plaint
And hold to your Heart their bosoms' silver sheen.

But cherish more my sister sweet and me.
Carry *within* your Heart, and all the way,
Our souls to the true Temple. Offer'd so,
They cannot perish — no, nor parted be:
For He whom you presented on this day
Whom you present His own must ever know.

1876.

THE SMILE

I WAS sad — 'twas a folly to go —
'Mid the laugh of the young and the gay:
I was lonely for one that I know;
For my sweet sister, then far away —
In her calm convent-home far away.

But my Queen, *she* was not far away?
She could sunshine my heart with her grace?
Ah, yes! But I pined for a ray
Such as beams from a visible face —
From the soul in my Angela's face.

And you pitied me, too, O my Queen!
For you sent me the face of a child:
A virginal face of fourteen,
With a pureness so bright when it smiled,
That all day it was *you* who had smiled!

1877.

NOT YET

METHOUGHT the "King of Terrors" came my way:
Whom all men flee, and none esteem it base.
But lo, his smile forbidding me dismay,
I stood — and dared to look him in the face.
"So soon!" the only murmur in my heart:
For I had planned the deeds of many years:
Ambitioning atonement, and, in part,
To reap in joy what I had sown in tears.[1]

[1] Ps. cxxv. 5, 6.

Then turning to Our Lady: "O my Queen,
'Twere very sweet already to have won
My crown, and pass to see as I am seen,
And nevermore offend thy blessèd Son:
Yet would I stay — and for myself, I own: —
To win a little nearer to thy throne."

IN CORDE JESU

MY Queen, thou knowest I would bring all hearts
To love thee, if I could — and more than mine.
Mine should be last and least. For love of thee,
Unlike all other, breeds not jealousy,
But rather makes its captive moan and pine
(Sure proof that 'tis a passion grace imparts)

To see thee lov'd thy due. But ah, if all
Of Adam's race should love thee with the love
Of Joseph and of John, 'twere not thy due!
For this no more the many than the few

Suffice; nor would yon myriad worlds above,
Peopled with souls had never known a fall.

The gather'd love of angels fails no less.
'Tis God's alone can satisfy the claim —
And that (glad thought!) o'erflows the measure's brim.
Yet should I find deficiency in Him,
Did He not call thee by the dearest name
Of Mother, and with human lips express

A human heart. But now I may not pine.
The Heart of Jesus loves thee all thy due
(A love the sweeter that there is but one).
And with His Heart I love thee, and atone
For hearts estranged, or lukewarm, or half-true,
And all the base inconstancies of mine.

PART II

From 1880 to 1898

THE TEMPTATION

LATE afternoon in summer. Earth and sky
Bathed in the light that hour alone can shed.
In shady nook, with outlook on a lake,
Lay one of mood contemplative. His heart
Sent up its silent orisons to God;
Touching the Master's touch, and, mind to mind,
Tasting the Infinite Beauty. Then — his wont —
He murmur'd an *Ave* to that fairest fair
Of creatures, who is Queen of all the rest.
For all sweet hours of day or night, all times
Of commune with great Nature, ever brought
His Lady-love before him; and he knew
No joy so thrilling as the thought of her —
Her loveliness, her glory, and the proofs
Many and tender she had deigned to give
That in her bosom was a place for him.

And here some thoughts that morning jotted down
Broke softly on the stillness — flowing thus:

When o'er mine eyes her image lies,
From poring on her pictur'd face,
Till soaring thought has almost caught
The features of the Throne of Grace:
I strive to press the vision in —
Deep down into my soul — and say:
"Blind with thy light, O beauteous ray,
These wonted avenues of sin!"

For could I meet, O Lady sweet!
That peerless face I long to see —
Those eyes of blue, which look me through,
And still can watch me lovingly;
The charm would haunt me with its bliss:
No less than, should I hear thee speak,
That music evermore would wreak
Its own melodious Nemesis!

But spirits malign are with us everywhere:
And soon a voice far other than his Queen's
Scoff'd answer:
"If the poet sing at all,
Be it to ears that hear. Else, less a waste
To keep his ditties pent within his soul.
And think you to bewitch a cultur'd age
With mediæval myths long voted stale?
Dreamer of vain ideals, go, exchange
Your pale Madonna for the Paphian queen:
Or if — too frigid for the glowing theme —
You needs must hymn some Casta Diva, choose
Dian; and paint her with her virgin train
By moonlight sleeping, or in morn-flush'd wave
White-shining. See you not, the world awakes
From Galilean nightmare, and re-tunes
Her slacken'd chords for old triumphant Pan?"

"Too fast," quoth he. "The Pagan comes again
In morals, if you will; but brings not back
The poesy sublime, deific lore,
Which saw divinity in Nature still,
Tho' blind to Nature's God. 'Twas Pantheist then —

In garb religious dight, with priest and cult:
But now crude, cold, and creedless Atheist.

"Nor talk of mediæval themes as stale,
Even if myths they be. No myth is mine.
Where else finds Tennyson enchanted ground
For epic idyl?" —
"Ay, forsooth! and *he* —
Bard of ideal knights and maids and wives —
Baits cunningly with 'Vivien' and 'Etarre,'
'Isolt' and 'Guinevere,' to catch the taste
That fails to relish 'Enid' and 'Elaine'!"

"Say, rather, that he sets in brighter light
True womanhood by contrast. So he makes
A foil of 'Lancelot' for the 'blameless King.'
But — say thy list — he holds this cultur'd age
In need of models from an age despised:
The age of chivalry, if 'rude' yclept;
Of faith, if 'dark'; and so of faith's ideals —
If myths, yet never vain.
Least vain is mine,
As thou, lost spirit, knowest but too well.
What wouldst not give to love the Queen of
heaven,

And serve among her angel ministers!
If I, then, loving her, would humbly make
My muse her handmaid, think not thine the skill
To bribe me from my purpose, couldst thou offer
A glory that should onward bear my name
Till time's last waters meet eternity.

"I sing not for the many. Some there are
With ears to hear, and hearts to love the more.
But my ambition's height is so to sing
That I may one day meet my Lady's smile,
And wear a laurel from her own dear hands."

VIA IMMACULATA [1]

I

MARY, thou chosen, thou Immaculate Way
Whereby our Jesus came unto His own;
Behold, to *me* He comes, to make a throne
Of my poor heart for brief, but gracious, stay!

[1] "The Immaculate Way" (a devotion for Holy Communion).

Let me by *thee* receive Him: for I may,
Since thus the world received Him — thus alone.
Lend me thy Heart, that treasure only known
At its full worth by Him who comes to-day.

Come to me, then, O Jesus — come, my King!
For see, I offer Thee a sinless Heart —
The one which drew Thee earthward in the hour
When, swifter than the glad archangel's wing,
Thou answeredst Mary's answer! Nor depart
Till she hath spoil'd thee a rich mercy's dower.

II

And now, my Queen, since thou with thy true Heart
Hast given me thy blessèd Son once more,
Abide with me, to thank Him and adore.
From thy sweet company He will not part,
How poor soever mine — whose utmost art
Is having *thee* to please Him and implore.
And I, in turn, will add unto the store
Of joy which heal'd thy sword-pierced bosom's smart.

Yes, Lady: here is gift for gift. Behold
This same dear Son of thine, and with Him me!
His Heart, with all its love, I give thee back;
And in it mine, so little, poor, and cold!
Accept the drop within the boundless sea:
For in that ocean thou canst find no lack.

Feast of the Purity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
October, 1880.

A CORDE MARIÆ

"HEART of Mary, be my home
Through the toilsome years to come.
Few or many let them be,
So I live them all in thee.

"Be my chapel when I pray:
Be my altar day by day:
Be my recollection sweet,
My perpetual retreat.

"If thy priest (for such my trust),
Keep me pure and mild and just:

Thy apostle, give me power:
If thy poet, be my bower."

Thus the new priest made his prayer,
Kneeling at Our Lady's altar.
For he felt 'twas she had call'd him:
Else had such a cross appall'd him
As the one he shoulder'd there
With a trust that did not falter.

Well he knew, from bitter past,
Nothing in himself avail'd him;
Who to her sweet interceding
Owed his faith with all its leading —
All the grace had held him fast,
All the help had never fail'd him.

. . . . . .

Twice four years had flow'd away;
Happy years, yet theme for sorrow.
Years of many wasted graces;
Years o'errun with folly's traces —
Ah, how oft the bright to-day
Bringing down the dark to-morrow!

Yet, through all, had Mary's Heart
Kept a faithful vigil o'er him.

If he left her, basely truant,
She was evermore pursuant—
With a mother's patient art
Shaping still his way before him.

So that, when at last he clomb
(Knowing 'twas her hand that beckon'd)
Up to higher paths and surer,
Stronger air, and sunshine purer—
Scaled to find the chosen home
All that fondest hope had reckon'd—

Was it strange that, full of rest
On a love would never vary,
He should pledge that love requital,
Taking for his new name's title [1]
One which told his story best—
Simply "Of the Heart of Mary"?

[1] In taking one's "new name," upon entrance into religious life, one receives not only the name of some Saint, but also what is called a "title"—*viz.*, "*of*" . . . some person or some thing (*e.g.*, "of the Holy Ghost," "of the Five Wounds," "of the Heart of Mary").

AT HOME

THERE'S a Star that I follow, of kindliest ray:
For she never has fail'd, never led me astray,
Since the hour she look'd down on a sea that was dark,
To guide my toss'd boat to the one saving Ark.

'Tis for her I am here, at her gentle command;
For a work that is hers in this strange Southern land:
And I find souls as precious, and hearts warm and true,
As on those belov'd shores I have bidden adieu.

But a dearer joy still — ah, how wordlessly dear! —
Is the sense of her presence so tenderly near.
Oh, never was sister or lover, I ween,
Could sunshine the heart like my beautiful Queen!

Sweet Mother of God, my inviolate Love!
What more can I ask, till I see thee above,

Than to feel in this exile, where'er I may
roam,
Thy keeping my rest, and thy bosom my
home?

Buenos Ayres, February, 1884.

TO FLORENCE:

BORN WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASSUMPTION

OUR Lady's bright triumphal feast
To me grows dearer year by year,
For some new charm 'tis sure to gain:
As now, to grace its memories' chain,
One blossom more — with sunny tear
Bejewell'd from a faith-lit East —

Your birthday. To be born at all
Within the month we consecrate
To Mary's Heart, is boon, I ween,
More than the heirdom of a queen:
That Heart the heavenly palace Gate
For those who love its gentle thrall.

But you, within this octave born,
  Are highlier favor'd, happy girl!
    Our Lady keeps you in her Heart
    Nearer its centre — more apart.
  To me, you rest there like a pearl
In depths all rosy with the morn

Of love that grows to perfect day.

. . . . . .

  Yet think not mine an idle lute,
    To flattery tuned. Less yours the wrong
    Than hers were then this tribute song.
  Better the chords forever mute
Than sounding one untruthful lay.

Be sure your place in Mary's Heart
  Will cost you dearly. You must learn
    The precious lore of sacrifice.
    And 'tis, in sooth, a heavy price
  For one who craves, at every turn,
Her own sweet will — if such the art

You follow for a life of peace?
  If wiser, then but ponder well
    The sorrows of that sinless breast —
    Which yet knew naught to mar its rest:

Ask why and whence the dolorous spell
That ruled her — but with joy's increase —

Since first the angel's *Ave* woke
Her maiden tremor, till the hour
When, exile o'er, she stoop'd to death?
And why, at last, that yielded breath?
Where sin had never reign'd, what power
Had vanquish'd death to deal his stroke?

One answer waits: So will'd it God.
And she, His Handmaid evermore,
Nor counting aught but love for loss,
Drank her Son's chalice, shared His Cross;
And, while each step her heart-strings tore,
In blood-stained footprints firmly trod!

So will'd it God. And, winning thus
The crown of perfect sacrifice,
She took her seat on Jesus' throne
By right of conquest like His own;
Nor claim'd her place in Paradise
By dower of grace unshared with *us*.

Then school thee well, child, where thou art:
No choicer school, no kinder home.

Howe'er our skies may change their weather,
May thou and I abide together
Where now, for many a year to come,
I wish thee joy — in Mary's Heart!

Buenos Ayres, August 19, 1885.

TO MY SISTER AMY

"HER face is tow'rd Jerusalem [1] — of Peace the Vision fair; [2]
Though little knows she yet, dear girl, the full feast waiting there.
Nor falter now, but firmly tread,
Her eager footsteps, mercy-led."

So musing, sweet, when came to-day your letter from the sea —
Triumphant o'er the ruthless waves which sunder you and me —
I hail'd with joy that not in vain
My fond prayer soars and soars again.

[1] St. Luke, ix. 51–53.
[2] Jerusalem means "Vision of Peace."

Ay, morn and eve: but most, what time before
God's altar stands
Your brother, and Our Lord Himself lies Victim
in his hands,
He thinks of you, and lifts on high
The Host, the Chalice, with a sigh

That asks the help, the light, the strength you
need to follow on
Until the gift of perfect faith, the City's gate,
be won.
And your dear name is uppermost
When I would sue the Holy Ghost

With hymn and collect, tenderly, for all my
kith and kin,
That He, whose grace o'erflows the Church,
may surely bring them in;
Or bid, at least, her saving power
Shadow their souls in life's last hour.

And oh, how calmly, day by day, I place you
in the Heart
Of God's own Blessed Mother, who will do
her loving part!
I see her peerless title shine
Your guiding-star, as once 'twas mine.

Our Lady, then, you know her now, and own
our homage true:
But have not thought of her, I ween, as *your*
sweet Mother too?
Ah, call her so, and you shall prove
The wonders of that new-found love!

BUENOS AYRES, June 30, 1885.

THE WREATH AND THE FLOWER

I

I CULL'D my Queen the choicest blooms
That grow in poet's garden;
For well I knew who thus presumes
Need never ask her pardon.

I wove a wreath of honeyed flowers,
The brightest and the rarest.
But one was left to sun and showers —
The simplest, yet the fairest.

I thought, because 'twas found beside
The highways and the hedges;
In knots where quiet streamlets glide,
Or lone on rocky ledges;

'Twas all too common for a crown
As rare as I was wreathing:
Yet none so fitting her renown,
Or richer fragrance breathing.

II

My wreath, 'twas every sweetest name
Of cunning love's devising:
A garland some would scorn to frame,
As 'neath Our Lady's prizing.

And that one flower of common growth,
Yet fairer than all other?
A word no lips are ever loath
To voice — the name of Mother.

She, of all mothers, needs must love
This tender name most dearly.
No angel-note she hears above
Can touch her Heart so nearly.

For — more than any music when
Her mortal children sigh it —
The Lord of angels and of men,
Her Maker, calls her by it!

III

Then, radiant Queen, thou fairest fair —
Who with a smile undoest
All other chains thy captives wear —
Of true-loves thou the truest!

If I, among thy bondsmen least —
This heart so oft betrays thee —
May yet, as now, on *thy* Heart's feast,
A chaplet weave to praise thee:

'Mid rarer blooms I deftly twine
From wealth of poet's bower,
A dewy gem shall frequent shine,
That one sweet, simple flower.

So, for thine eyes, the wreath shall mean
(Small matter what for other):
"My dearest Love, because my Queen —
But more, because my Mother."

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, 1886.

TWO FLOWERS

I

THESE Carmen[1] Camps' delicious green,
While others mourn the lingering drought,
Turns thought to thee, my dearest Queen!
These breezes, too, which waft about

Thy blessing — balmy airs, that bring
Thus early, in the wonted hour
Of chilling gales,[2] the sense of Spring —
Remind us of thy gentle power.

II

Our Lady of Mount Carmel keeps
Around her town[3] a garden fair,
And richer dews than evening weeps
Are falling ever fruitful there.

And one choice flower 'tis mine to know:
A lily — all so pure and sweet

[1] "Carmen" is Spanish for Carmel. The "Carmen Camps" are the plains around Carmen de Areco, a town in the Province of Buenos Ayres.

[2] September is the March of this climate.

[3] The town is named after Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and has its church dedicated to her.

That only Mary's self can show
The treasure blooming at her feet.

To me she shows it. Ay, my Queen:
Thou bidst me prize what thou dost prize;
And 'tis enough when I have seen
Wherever rest those gracious eyes.

And lo! beside this lily rare
A rose unfolds its blushing leaves,
And looks — so fresh, so free from care —
But form'd to smile where nothing grieves!

It shall. But ah! not yet, not here,
Can rose or lily smile for aye!
There's need of many an April tear
To deck them for eternal May.

III

How favor'd I, to share a task
Which angels covet — yea, thine own,
Sweet Mother! Thou hast deign'd to ask
A prayer at Jesus' altar-throne —

A faithful prayer through years to come —
To help thee cherish lives like these!

. . . . . .

I promise. Let my Northern home
Reclaim me — daily o'er the seas

Shall memory, dove-like, wing her flight,
To circle round thy Carmen bower:
Until that other garden's light
With glory robe each fadeless flower.

September, 1886.

VIRGO FIDELIS

OF all thy titles, O my Queen and Mother,
In this sweet Litany said or sung —
A row of pearls so deftly strung,
'Tis hard to call one fairer than another —

"Virgo Fidelis" is to me the dearest.
Nor only that it brings to view
Thy perfect faith, so staunchly true,
And trustful Heart, to *His* Heart ever nearest

Who would not die without thee standing by Him;
Who proved thee in thy Dolors Seven,
And left thee when He went to heaven
(Knowing thou wouldst not even this deny Him)

To watch with all a mother's best devotion
Over the new-born Church, and grow
Into its very life-blood's flow
Of holiest thought and tenderest emotion.

But more, thy faithfulness as mine own Mother —
To one so basely mean to thee;
One so unworthy ev'n to be
Last of thy servants, less than lowest other!

'Tis this, all this, I hear in that sweet title,
"Virgo Fidelis." Ah! 'twere woe —
'Twere blank despair — did I not know
Thou hast in Jesus' love thy full requital.

Lent, 1888.

TO MY SISTER AMY BECOME A CATHOLIC

"AT last within the Gates," I said: "within the Jasper[1] Walls!
Where comes not darkness — no, nor mist — but ever sweetly falls

[1] Apoc. xxi. 18. — How significant, that the walls of the New Jerusalem (the Church) are of the same material as the first founda-

The light of perfect faith, the peace
Where doubts are dead and errors cease."

Dear sister mine, though ruthless waves roll
longer 'twixt us now,
And I waft kisses o'er the snow on Aconcagua's
brow,
Yet are we nearer than before —
Than when I sang from Plata's shore.

Ay, nearer than the happy day when heart to
heart we stood;
When home I came and found you grown to
blooming womanhood —
Just sixteen summers older — you
Whom I had left a child of two:

For oh! how little knew we then each other's
deeper thought!
No word had ever cross'd the void my Roman
faith had wrought —
A gulf that parted home and me
With wider reach than Atlas' sea.

tion-stone (v. 19), on which is the name of the first Apostle (v. 14)! Peter's faith is not only the first foundation of the Church, but forms the very walls that encompass her.

But now, for both, this Roman faith, which
caused those silent years,
Is more than closest tie of blood — more
sacredly endears:
Nor mountains rise nor ocean rolls
Can sunder now our hearts and souls.

O twice my sister — in the bond of one all-
precious faith,
Which knits our very spirits here, and will not
break at death!
What reck if yet we cannot meet
But in devotion pure and sweet?

One home of truth, one realm of grace, one
Sacrifice divine,
One Mother Mary's Heart of love — all this is
yours and mine;
And nearness of supreme content
In the Most Blessed Sacrament!

VALPARAISO, CHILI, 1888.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "SHE"[1]

I

I WEEN was never a more potent spell
Than thine, Magician, in this weird romance.
For deeper minds, it leads no idle dance
Thro' realistic scenes; but ponders well
The mystery of Life: the rise and swell
Of Time's great tides: their promise-bright advance,
And pitiless ebb — which seems, to mortal glance,
So fate-fraught, and evokes melodious knell.

And what our sense of immortality?
Does it but mean we live again, again,
Re-incarnated, yet to cease at last?
Ah, Truth is a "veil'd goddess" unto thee![2]

[1] These sonnets were originally written in 1888, during my stay in Chili, and appeared in the London *Month*, over the signature of "Theophilus." Several changes have since been made; and the first eight lines of the fourth sonnet written anew, for the reason that I had made *Ustane* rhyme with "vain" — whereas the name should be pronounced *Oostáhneh*.

[2] See the splendid chapter headed "The Temple of Truth."

Tho' Hope and Love shine star-like not in vain
To guide thee upward from the groping past.

II

Thou speakest of the Spirit Infinite,
Whose hand hath set the myriad orbs of space
To run their courses. From His breath the race
Of Man hath being; from His wisdom light.
Yet seemeth He to use a boundless might
In sporting with creation. We may trace
His presence, but shall never see His face;
And needs must worship His unquestion'd right.

I gather such thy creed. Yet thou dost long
To rest in vision of the Perfect Good —
Fruition of the Beautiful, the True:
Wherein thy spirit, ever fresh and strong,
May sate its hunger on celestial food —
Knowledge and Love — with relish ever new.

III

Then, whence this longing? Comes it not from Him
Who form'd thee? Thou art conscious of a soul.
Then, say not He has made the golden bowl
To break, nor rather fill it to the brim.
Thou wouldst not charge Him with caprice or whim?
Yet, had He left us pressing toward a goal
Forever out of reach, let ages roll —
No Word divine where reason's light is dim,
No answer to the universal cry
Of children feeling for a Father's arms —
How were He God? How Goodness absolute?
But God He is. And this the only why
That Knowledge doth not mock us with its charms,
And Love yields more than ashes for its fruit.

IV

Not mine the thought that thou dost overrate
The strength of woman's love in braving pain —
Ay, death itself. "Ustané" pleads in vain,

Then meets unflinchingly her cruel fate.
And SHE, repentant Ayesha,[1] dares to wait
  Two thousand years till *he* shall come again
  Whom for his truth her jealous hand hath slain;
Nor, dying, deems a second age too late.

If ever human love be "strong as death,"
  'Tis woman's. Hers a patience, and a trust,
    A constancy that prove the deeper heart:
And most in Motherhood. I match my faith
  With thine in woman's love. Do thou — 'tis just —
    Match thine with mine in God's love ere we part.

V

For whence hath woman's heart its wondrous dower?
  The gift of Him that made it. But to give
  Is theirs who *have*. In God, then, must it live,
This tender love and true — this priceless power
To bless in joy's, to soothe in sorrow's, hour —

[1] Pronounced "Assha," Mr. Haggard tells us.

This constancy, so patient to achieve
A conquest, and so often doom'd to grieve
O'er some frail prize that withers like a flower.

Yea, He who gave must *have* withal. And I
Learn God's love more from Woman than from Man,
From Mother than from Father. But with *Him*
It cannot fail in purpose. Ah, then, why
Wilt thou not trust it, tho' it work a plan
That baffles us where reason's light is dim?

VI

Enough for me, that when He came to save
His fallen world (to thee not unbeknown
The Christian's lore), from woman's heart alone
He took the virginal ransom which He gave.
See Him a Babe in Bethlehem's stable-cave!
Was ever winsome love so sweetly shown?
That Mother: will He keep *her* all His own —
The one pledge more our timid faith would crave?

Ah no! He makes her from the very Cross
Our Mother, with a prayer that cannot fail—
A prayer shall hold His mercy when He needs
Must judge us!
What if heresy spurn for dross
This chain of gold? No truth has more avail
With Wisdom's children in the creed of creeds.

VII

Ay, One I know, true Ayesha, second Eve:
No fond ideal of what can never be,
Yet peerless Queen of womankind is she,
Past fairest all that poet-thought may weave.
Conceiv'd Immaculate; chosen to conceive
Incarnate Godhead: Queen of chastity;
Nor less of mercy, tho' herself so free
From shadow of stain! Ah, didst thou but believe

In this sweet Virgin with her twofold love
Maternal — then, as mirror'd in a lake,

The beauty of God would feast thy happy
sight:
Nor wouldst thou seek to pierce the skies
above —
Content to trust a Goodness which could make
In darkling world such depths of perfect
light!

VIÑA DEL MAR, CHILI,
1888.

TO MY SISTER CONSTANCE

I JOY in thinking, dearest sister mine,
That you were born into this world of strife
So near the Birthday of the Lord of life,
Who brought the empire of a peace divine.[1]
For see! The royal Maid of David's line
To Bethlehem comes as humble Joseph's
wife;
And turns her from the inn, where tongues
are rife
With jest and gibe — or, if some heart incline
To pity the young Mother, none will brave
Discomfort for her sake: — ay, turns away —

[1] Born December 22d.

And God within her — following her spouse
To meanest shelter in a stable-cave:
And there, for all the quiring angels' lay,
Creation's King and Queen with beasts must house!

That inn the blind, self-seeking world. How blest
To live, like Mary, hidden and unknown,
Are you, amid a world which "loves its own,"
But shuts out God, with whom alone is rest!
Your favorite task, too, is of all the best:
To tend and teach the lowly; who may groan
At worldly doors for comfort, grudged if thrown;
In health as cattle deem'd, in sickness pest.
'Tis thus *you* house it with the wondrous Three,
Whom yet you view but as in pictur'd story.[1]

[1] Cardinal Newman, in his "Grammar of Assent" (p. 57), says of Anglicanism: "It is not a religion of persons and things, of acts of faith and of direct devotion; but of sacred scenes and pious sentiments. . . . Its doctrines are not so much facts, as stereotyped aspects of facts; and it is afraid, so to say, of walking round them.

God's touch of grace must give you other sight.
And this I pray Him — that, as once to me
Stole from that midnight grot a ray of glory,[1]
So thence to you may come faith's perfect light.

FEAST OF ST. EDMUND OF CANTERBURY.

It induces its followers to be content with this meagre view of revealed truth; or, rather, it is suspicious and protests, or is frightened, as if it saw a figure in a picture move out of its frame, when Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, or the Holy Apostles are spoken of as real beings, and really such as Scripture implies them to be." I mean, then, that a pious Anglican may believe no less than a Catholic in the Gospel story of the Nativity; and, again, from devotion to the poor for Our Lord's sake, may feel quite at home in the grotto of Bethlehem, as regards its opposition to the spirit of worldliness: yet that only we Catholics can feel *personally* at home there, as *ourselves members* of the Holy Family — brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, with His Father (whose representative or "shadow" we behold in St. Joseph) for our Father, and His Mother for our Mother.

[1] The glory, to wit, of the divine Maternity; and, therefore, a ray of light as to Our Blessed Lady's place in the kingdom of the Incarnation.

THE ROSARY

I KNOW a garden of roses sweeter far
Than ever woo'd the amorous nightingale,
Or glisten'd dewy to the vesper star
In fairest Eastern vale.

For lo, the King and Queen of all the flowers
Did plant this Eden in the realm of Prayer—
Endow'd with murmurous streams and restful bowers
And ever gentle air!

But loveliest charm the roses white and red;
That fade not when we cull them, but will breathe
Immortal fragrance when the crowns are dead
Which pride and pleasure wreathe.

And who may enter here? What hands may dare
To gather of these roses? All for whom
Faith keeps the gate: no angel standing there
With flaming sword of doom.

Not youth alone, nor innocence, shall find
The morning freshness and the noonday rest:

But toil and age, worn body, weary mind,
And conscience-stricken breast.

Yea, guilt herself may come and bind the brow
Which many a harden'd year has paled and
wrinkled —
With garlands from a better wave, I trow,
Than fabled Lethe sprinkled.

A FAREWELL[1]

STARS of the Southern sky,
Soon to be hidden by the ruthless sea,
Another fond good-by —
A long one — aye, forever, it may be!

I learnt to love you well
In boyhood first, what time your mystic rays
Would awe me with their spell,
Yet whisper peace and promise happy days.

But little guess'd my thought
What peace awaited me — what peerless gain.

[1] At sea. May, 1892.

A treasure cheaply bought,
If such had been its price, by years of pain.

O holy Faith of Rome,
I read thy symbols now in yonder sky!
Gem-bright on velvet dome,
A lore which erst escaped my boyish eye.

The Cross, the Crown — how much
Their meaning now! The Bird's unfolding wings.[1]
The Harp that waits the touch
Of victor hand upon its golden strings.

And lo, Saint Peter's bark —
The Ship that circumnavigates the pole!
Sail on, O saving ark —
Imperishable transport of the soul!

An upward glance, and there
The Virgin stands. Madonna, it is thou!
Faint-outlined form so fair:
But one pure star to grace thy royal brow:

[1] Symbol of prayer and contemplation.

Yet thou it is. The sign
From thought of thee received its pagan name,
As primal word divine
In dim tradition down from Eden came.

Queen of my life, though late
Beknown to this frail heart, but lov'd the more!
I hail in thee my fate —
My pilot to the everlasting shore.

What wonder that I see
Long rosaries of stars,[1] that bid me pray
With tender trust to thee
For daily help and dear ones far away?

Farewell, O Southern sky!
I take thy lessons to my Northern home.
Beam on me till I die,
Remember'd orbs, the heav'n-born light of Rome!

[1] There are long *strings* of tiny stars in the Southern sky.

COMMEMORATIVE OF DECEMBER 18, 1889

I

I LOV'D before thy feast of Expectation,
Queen of my heart — ay, lov'd it passing well.
One of the beads thy priest is wont to tell
In his thanksgiving chaplet of vocation:
Recounting, from the first sweet inspiration,
Each tender touch of light, and how it fell;
But fondly lingering on the goal to dwell —
Th' irrevocable step of consecration,
Which, daring much, yet wisely, he did take
When holy Church, with caution due, bestow'd
Her first of greater orders. She that day
Was keeping this thy feast; and seem'd to say,
"Pass calmly on. Not perilous the road
To those who choose it for Our Lady's sake."

II

But now this day will speak to eye and ear
With charm still deeper: and recall a scene
Of bliss long-hoped for, which at last *hath been.*
A priest at the altar stands; and, kneeling near,
His pure-soul'd sister prays, o'erjoy'd to hear
Her brother's Mass. And soon at the rail they meet —
Meet soul to soul in one Communion sweet;
Heart beats with heart in One supremely dear —
The Heart of Him who gave them to each other
In the one Faith, one Hope, one Love divine.
Such the bright vision, such the music heard,
On this thy feast, at memory's magic word:
While thou art looking on, O Blessed Mother,
Supplying for our feeble thanks with thine!

III

But thou didst more than smile on us and pray.
A visit to thy shrine; and lo, thy face

Beams softly down upon the very place
Where Amy knelt, another happy day,[1]
To cast the bonds of heresy away!
And here the coveted privilege is mine
To clothe her with thy Scapular, in sign
Of homage thou wilt lovingly repay
With swift protection at all hours, but most
When things of earth to dying eyes grow dim.

"With thee I leave her, then!" my parting boast:
"With thee for Jesus — safer than before.
What recks it if on earth we meet no more,
So thou but keep us in thy Heart for Him?"

Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel,
Buenos Ayres, 1890.

[1] October 12, 1888.

ENGLAND REVISITED

I

DEAR England, seen once more in leafy June —
But thrice within a score of years and five,
And twice beheld when fondness had to strive
'Gainst winter's reign and feelings out of tune —
How beautiful I found thee! What a boon
To taste again thy best of fresh and green!
Thou hast not changed, if I have. Nor, I ween,
Have I in love for thee, though sun and moon
Of fairer climes have woo'd me.
Dearer far
I hold thee now than when, in youthful days,
I sigh'd for other shores. And if I go,
'Tis only that my Lady wills it so.
And oh, how peacefully the heart obeys
Her sweet behest — my life's sure-guiding Star!

II

Ah, thou wast once her very "Dower" yclept!
Wilt yet reclaim the title? I may trust

High Mercy's purpose (and, in sooth, I must —
Or vainly would thy saints have pray'd and wept,
Thy martyrs agonized): that thou art kept
For great achievement in the final times —
When thou shalt nobly expiate the crimes
Of faithless centuries — thy dream outslept.

Ay, even now that evil dream is breaking —
That spell Satanic which has bound thee long;
And o'er thy senses the remember'd song
Of ancient worship stealing: while the face
Of God's sweet Virgin-Mother, full of grace,
Looks down forgivingly to greet thy waking!

Sacred Heart Retreat,
Louisville, Ky.

PUER NATUS EST NOBIS

THE feast of Madonna and Child —
Of Mary with Babe on arm!
Nor frost and snow, nor season mild,
Can make or mar its charm.

I have kept it on Plata's shore,
'Mid heats of Southern June;
And where Pacific tides brim o'er
Beneath a summer moon:

But the sense of strange would cease;
For there it was Christmas still:
And clear the song "On earth be peace
Wherever reigns good-will."

"To every people joy":
For the Christ was born for all.
If shepherds found the wondrous Boy
At herald angel's call,

A Star in the East shone forth,
To glad the Gentiles' sight:
While broke for West and South and North
The promised dawn of light.

Dear God! What a gift is His!
With Jesus our Baby-Brother,
His Father in heaven our Father is,
And Mary our own sweet Mother!

OUR LADY OF THE HOLY SOULS

THE Queen of heaven we hail thee, and of earth —
The Church Triumphant tho' thy chief domain,
Yet this our Sion, Militant from birth,
With thee to aid, hath never fought in vain.

Nor is it less for thy divine Son's glory
That thou art Empress o'er the realm below,
Where languish the poor souls in Purgatory —
The Church Expectant, in her peaceful woe.

Ay, there too thou dost reign — a Queen, a Mother!
The "prisoners of the King" thy subjects are:
But more thy children — sister each, or brother,
To Him whose justice keeps them still afar.

And well thou knowest how to soothe their pains
With tender ministries by angel hands.

Who least deserve, thy mercy ne'er disdains:
Where least thy power, thy pity most expands.

Where least thy power? Ah, foolish mortals they,
Whose little love, and service prone to tire,
So circumscribe thy very right to pray,
That scarcely canst thou claim them — "saved by fire"!

But blest, thrice blest, who give thee more and more
The right to shield them in their combat here!
For these, when they have won Salvation's shore,
Shall find thy Heart a refuge sweetly near.

We well believe that there are golden days
When thou descendest, with an angel train,
To bear away to choirs of endless praise
A favor'd throng from ever-ended pain.

And most upon thy bright Assumption feast
Thou bringest, it is said, rich harvest home.

But oh, not less, I trow, when wafts the East
Mount Carmel's gratitude to mindful Rome?

O wondrous Scapular! O sacred sign
Of promise true to save, and strong to free!
'Tis all the cunning of a Love divine!
Yes, Mother — of the love that gave us thee!

TO LEO XIII

I

"LUMEN *DE* CŒLO"[1] do we read thy name,
In mystic lore previsioned long ago?
Then, such the wisdom thou hast made to flow
Like light around thee: for from heaven it came.
If nations heed it not, but theirs the blame.
It shines for all, with pure and placid glow:

[1] There seem to be two readings of this title: "Lumen *de* Cœlo" — Light *from* heaven; and "Lumen *in* Cœlo" — Light (or A Light) *in* heaven. Each is singularly appropriate, as I have shown in these sonnets.

Ay, harbinger of peace, like Noe's bow;
And eloquent with Pentecostal flame.

"Great Leo the Peacemaker," men will say,
Who gather fruit in better times to be,
Reaping what thou hast sown. In times not far,
I ween, though darkness follow swift the day
Of thy bright reign — till faith-lit eyes shall see
"Pastor Angelicus'" triumphant star.[1]

II

"LUMEN *IN* CŒLO" reads thy title too.
And this thou art in heaven's wide kingdom here —
The holy Church. A light to love, to fear —
As men would seek, or shun, the good, the true.
But other sense, methinks, the prophet knew;

[1] According to the prophetic list of the Popes "Lumen de Cœlo" is to be followed by "Ignis Ardens," "Religio Depopulata," and "Fides Intrepida," before "Pastor Angelicus" shall appear. Three periods (probably very short) of conflict and persecution, therefore, will precede the promised triumph.

Since one meek soul[1] hath found it sweetly
clear: —
There is an Eye in heaven[2] — Our Lady
dear —
Whose watchful glance the baffled Fiend doth
rue.

For thou, O Pontiff, with unerring voice,
Hast bidden us call on Mary, loud and long,
And in thy hand chief weapon we behold
Her Rosary — the unletter'd peasant's choice.
O simplest prayer, yet still divinely strong
As when its worth Lepanto's glory told!

TO CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

I

GOD chose thee out, O man of faith and
prayer,
And sent thee o'er the deep — if truth be told.
Neither ambition's greed nor lust of gold

[1] A favored French domestic, Madeleine Porsat. (See "The Christian Trumpet," sixth edition, page 196.)

[2] "Lumen" means "eye" in poetry, therefore also in prophecy.

Could make thy heart so confidently dare.
"The boldest steer," the poet saith, "but where
Their ports invite." Yet thou, divinely bold,
Didst little reck what wrathful billows roll'd
'Twixt thee and shores *imagined* — havens fair
Which seem'd to lesser minds the veriest "stuff"
That "dreams are made of."
Into the vast unknown
Thou wentest forth — in steadfast hope, alone.
But God was with thee: for thy peace enough.
His breezes serv'd thee; and when seas were dark,
His stars more surely led thy destined bark.

II

Ay, and for thee a Star shone all the way
Which others would not see — the Queen of stars.
Brighter than Venus, Jupiter, and Mars
In one; and clearest 'mid the blaze of day.
The Ocean Star, whose sweetly constant ray
Smiled calmness on a brow no petty jars

Could vex — a brow where pain had printed
scars
Which told of vanquish'd self through years of
fray.

Thy soul, uplifted ever to the light
Of that true Guide whose name thy vessel
bore,
Took her for pilot. Morning, noon, and night,
To her thine "Aves" rose: and more and
more
Thy trust increased, the sullen crew despite —
Their menace deadlier than the tempest's
roar.

III

But thou, Christ-Bringer to the new half-
world,
Christ-Bearer too, didst, with the Christ, His
Cross
Thy portion find. Thy glory's earthly gloss
Scarce lasted till the home-bound sails were
furl'd.
Ingratitude and envy swiftly hurl'd
Their torches at thy fame. But was it loss

They wrought thee? Nay, a merit purged
of dross.
For this those lurid flames so fiercely curl'd.

And when had passed the years that seem'd so
long,
And came Our Lady with a call to rest,
She led thy spirit through the sainted throng
To where her Son reigns Monarch of the
blest;
And He bestow'd, in meed of suffer'd wrong,
A richer realm than thy discover'd West.

NOTRE DAME[1]

I

OUR LADY OF THE WEST — the fresh
young West,
So full of promise for the years to come —
She stands right queenly on her gilded dome,
And claims it all: its all of first and best,
Its all of hearts and souls, that cannot *rest*

[1] The University of Notre Dame, Indiana: conducted by priests and brothers of the Congregation of the Holy Cross.

But in the Truth, or out of Truth's one home:
Ay, claims it all — for Jesus and for Rome —
What though unheard, though scorn'd her loving quest.

And lo, the realm beneath her feet! Look round.
This wide domain, these structures chaste and fair —
Are they a vision soon to melt in air?
For seems it that I tread enchanted ground.
If I but dream, by some magician bound,
Ah, let not hope awaken to despair!

II

No dream, my soul. For here, where Science rules
A chosen band well skill'd to teach and guide,
The Seat of Wisdom doth herself preside
O'er truth's diffusion through harmonious schools:
Not godless knowledge — making apter tools
For devils' purposes — the food of pride:
Nor hollow cant — stern duty set aside —
That swells "the endless multitude of fools."

The Cross their banner, Mary's favor'd sons
Preach *first* th' evangely of Christ and Paul —
The one "Divine Philosophy," in sooth:
So simply clear that he may read who runs;
Yet compassing and consecrating all
That deepest minds can glean and store of truth.

III

'Mid yonder trees another stately pile,[1]
With temple at its side! Approach: for there
One vision more of structures chaste and fair
Will well repay the intervening mile.
And let our guide recount for us the while
How blossom'd forth, from desert wild and bare,
These gardens of true life and culture rare:
Romantic tale might many a league beguile.

'Tis here Our Lady's daughters take their part
In working out her high and gracious plan.
They aim to form the woman in the girl:

[1] St. Mary's Convent and Academy. The academy is conducted by Sisters called "Marianites of the Holy Cross."

Their chiefest care for virtue's priceless pearl;
Nor foolishly unsex "the lesser man,"[1]
And strain her brain to rob her of her heart.

IV

Thy daughters, O my Queen; and call'd to pray
As thou didst in thy Dolors: evermore
With tender sympathy musing o'er and o'er
Those Sorrows Seven: and thus, from day to day,
Keeping thee company along the way
Of perfect sacrifice.[2]
Unworldly lore,
O worldling! Truly. And is this their store,
You ask, for schooling maidens bright and gay?
Not *all* their store, O sage one! But the rest
Hath hence its sanction.
Culture, understood,
Must lead its votary to a *higher* good.
What feeds self-worship, then — is this the best?

[1] "Woman is the lesser man." — Tennyson.
[2] The Sisters wear the Seven Dolor Rosary at their girdles.

Or that which takes self-conquest for its test?
Which shapes the nobler, lovelier woman-
hood?

V

Farewell, Notre Dame! St. Mary's, and to
thee!
Visions of beauty not beheld in vain:
An earnest of the boon redeeming pain
Did purchase for us — present and to be.
Farewell, ye temples rich and pure: to me
Unrivall'd trophies of faith's patient gain:
Not only here, on Indiana's plain,
But o'er this continent from sea to sea!

Our Lady of the West! who love thy sway
And long to hail it under every sky,
Know naught of anxious tremors while they
pray.
Like yon Saint Joseph's river, gliding by
So calmly that its flow deceives the eye,
Thy gentle power securely makes its way.

REST BY THE WAY

OH long, sad journey, from the land of light,
Jehovah's land, to Egypt's darken'd realm,
Where reign'd idolatry — with feller blight
Than all ten plagues, than waters arm'd [1] to whelm
The host of Pharao! Yet that weary way
Was broken oft by hours of blissful rest,
When the young Mother could repose and pray,
As slept the rescued Infant on her breast.
And ministering angels then drew near,
With melodies of heav'n to soothe His sleep.
And thine, my Queen, no less. Thy soul could hear
Those dulcet strains: and thou didst softly weep
In ecstasy of joy. Ah, blessed One —
With God's Word-Music for thy very Son!

[1] "He shall arm the creature, and it shall fight with Him against the impious." — Wisdom.

ON A PICTURE OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

"MY Queen, my Love — all-beautiful!
Could I but see thy face,
And hear thy voice," I fondly sighed, "what
need of other grace?

"Such power hath music o'er my soul, and
beauty o'er my heart,
What folly could allure me *then* from wisdom's
way to part?"

But this a boon she could not grant, and leave
me still on earth —
Still striving for the perfect joy 'gainst things of
little worth:

And so her angel brough one day a picture
wholly new
To eyes that turned from highest art and hun-
gered for the true:

A picture all so heavenly sweet — the Mother
with the Child;
And that blue mantle folding Him to bosom
undefiled.

I said: "Dear messenger of bliss, what may
this vision be?"
"Our Lady of Good Counsel — from a
famous shrine," quoth he.

And seems it now, in very sooth, each morning
I have seen
Thy blessed face, and heard thy voice, all-
beautiful, my Queen!

January, 1895.

TO THE LADY OF MY LOVE

THOU hearest oft "All-beautiful, my
Queen!"
From one who worships what he has not seen:
From one content to know thee fairest fair
Of womankind, and sweet beyond compare,
And comely with immortal loveliness,
Surpassing all that poet's heart may guess.

And while he owns most humbly, as he ought,
His undeserving of one tender thought
From thee, O dearest! or of any place

In thine inviolate bosom full of grace,
He knows, from many a proof, that thou dost deign
Receive his love, and largely love again.

Then, if he finds thy beauty, O my Queen! —
Those eyes, those lips, that face — though yet unseen,
So strong a magnet to his thought; he fears
No blame for this — as when, in folly's years,
He made heart-idols. *Now* he museth well:
No siren lure has bound him in its spell.

Ah, pray that he may hunger more and more
To see thy face, this toilsome journey o'er:
To feast on loveliness can ne'er decay
Like earthly charms, which fade and pass away.
Next vision of the Godhead One and Trine,
Heaven's crowning joy is Jesus' face and thine.

ARGENTINA

I

"THY colors wave o'er yon fair land,
Thy virgin white, thy peerless blue:[1]
As tho' 'twere all at thy command,
O Queen of heaven — no heart untrue!

"And yet thy foes seem masters there —
Oath-banded in Satanic hate![2]
The poor Church groans, condemn'd to wear
The fetters of a godless State!

"Thou hast, I know, some loyal sons
And loving daughters left to mourn
Religion's plight: and swiftly runs
The spark of *hope* 'mid weed and thorn:

[1] The Argentine flag is peculiarly beautiful, being white and blue — the tint of blue called "Our Lady's blue."

[2] The government is a Masonic *ring*, and hampers the Church instead of fostering her; indeed, it does all it can do to undermine and ruin the faith of her people. For Masonry is there in its true colors — the sworn foe of the Incarnation and its kingdom.

"But feebly burns a fitful fire,
Where kindled once the faith of Spain
A beacon for the soul's desire! . . .
Ah, might that beacon shine again!"

II

Thus sadly, as I knelt once more
In *this* dear land where truth is free,
My thought went back to Plata's shore
And spoke a sorrowing heart to thee.

But thou, sweet Mother, while I heard
No voice, no whisper soft and low:
Didst answer make with surer word —
The mystic hint which gives to know.

"Hast lost the trust so long was thine —
Thy trust in Erin's chosen race?[1]
Not vainly plann'd my Son's design:
The present means the future grace.

[1] The Irish colony in the River Plata may well be called the hope of the Church there. That "Apostle people" have been *sent* there, I trust, no less than to the United States or to Australia.

"And thy Saint Paul hath compass'd well
A hold on Chili's sister shore.[1]
Despite the subtle wiles of Hell,
The work shall grow from more to more."

OUR LADY'S VANGUARD

HIS vigil kept Ignatius before Our Lady's shrine;
And hung his sword at morning there, irrevocable sign
That her true knight thenceforth was he, tho' yet all unbeknown
The service she would deign accept — her Son's will and her own.

But she, our ever-gracious Queen, prepared him well and long
To prove a soldier of the Cross — a leader calm and strong:

[1] The Passionist houses in Chili make a South American *Province* of the Congregation possible. We hope it will soon become an accomplished fact.

Nor will'd him to go forth alone, but form a
chosen band
Of martial spirits like himself, and sworn to his
command.

And then a name she gave, to grace their ban-
ner for all time:
Sure pledge of victory — a name o'er every
name sublime:
The name of Jesus, that dear Son who wages
constant fight
I' th' Church, His Body mystical, for truth's
eternal right.

Soon grew a host this little band — a host that
took the front,
To make the vanguard of the Church and bear
the battle's brunt.
Then baffled heresy recoil'd, to mourn the
broken spell
Of triumph which too long had fed the hungry
jaws of Hell.

Anew the great Apostleship of pulpit and of pen
Put forth its might: for teaching throve, and
learning lived again.

While lands afar, bedarken'd o'er with starless
pagan night,
Beheld at last the dawning of the sweet Evan-
gel's light.

THE ANNUNCIATION

I

I WEEN was never night so fair
Since Eden held the sinless pair.
Never the moon so chastely shone,
The stars so tenderly look'd on.
I fain would think that naught of ill
Was done or borne those hallow'd hours:
That firm stood every tempted will
And baffled Hell's astonish'd powers.
Nor only where the night had sway,
But where, beyond it, beam'd the day:
Through every clime of peopled earth,
On every land, on every sea,
There fell a wondrous Sabbath-rest —
A gather'd year of Jubilee.
The mother knew a painless birth;
The sufferer found unhoped relief;

The mourner's heart forgot its grief;
And sorrow thaw'd the frozen breast.
And not a soul that wing'd its flight
Across the darksome bourne of death,
But timely caught the saving light
That hung o'er favor'd Nazareth.

II

'Neath roof of lowly cottage there
A maiden kneels in silent prayer.
A lady she, of David's line,
Though clad in garb of peasant wear:
And oh, if other maids be fair,
Her beauty must be call'd divine!
'Tis "from within," as sang of old
Her raptur'd sire, to whom was given
To *see* what other bards foretold
As mystic secrets *heard* from heaven.
Not hers the only perfect face,
Or faultless form, of womankind:
Nor hers the only noble mind
Among the queens of Adam's race.
Yet ne'er shall highest artist guess
That pure transcendent loveliness
Whereon the reverent angel gaz'd,

When came the voice, "Hail, full of grace! . . ."
While she look'd up a moment's space,
And troubled seem'd — but not amaz'd!

III

"Hail, full of grace! With thee the Lord
Abideth ever," Gabriel said.
"Among all women blest art thou."
But ponder'd she, with modest brow,
What might import this sudden word;
And bent again her beauteous head.

"Fear naught, O Mary! Thou hast found
Such grace with God as none before.
He wills that thou conceive and bear
A Son, whom Jesus thou shalt call:
And who shall reign for evermore
On David's throne; but kinglier crown'd —
Son of the Highest, Lord of all."
He said: and seem'd the very air
To wait the royal Maid's reply.

"I pray thee tell how this shall be:
For vow'd perpetual virgin I."

"The Holy One, to whom thy vow,
Shall with His Spirit o'ershadow thee.
Inviolate thus shalt thou conceive,
Inviolate bear, a Son divine.
And lo, thy cousin Elizabeth,
Long barren call'd, holds even now
A son shall three months hence have birth!
For with the Lord of heaven and earth
Is surely done whate'er He saith."

A moment, such as ne'er had been
Since reach'd her hand the tempted Eve. . . .
Made answer then creation's Queen:
"God's handmaid I: His will is mine."

IV

Thus came to us Emmanuel,
The Word made flesh, God's equal Son:
The Second of the Three-in-One
Came down from heav'n with men to dwell.
And ever since that blessèd hour
This planet sphere — unseen, unknown
To worlds beyond our system's zone —
Hath held, I trow, a peerless place
Among the myriad orbs of space:

For here hath dwelt the Sovran Power
Who call'd them forth from primal naught;
Dwelt member of our mortal race,
And drawn with us life's fleeting breath;
Hath eat and drunk, and tasted sleep;
Hath deign'd to smile, to grieve, to weep;
Ay, even hath stoopt to pain and death—
Then burst the grave, redemption wrought.

THE VISITATION

I

THE Word made flesh — inviolately shrined,
O House of Gold, in thee —
He straightway moves thy ever-duteous mind
To sweetest charity.

In haste thou settest forth, to hail with joy
Thy cousin Elizabeth.
The angel told thee of her unborn boy;
And thy rewarded faith

Would clasp with hers. But little dost thou know,
As yet, the full design

Of that mysterious impulse bids thee go —
A purpose all divine.

II

Comes the New Covenant to meet the Old:
To bring the larger grace,
The nearer Presence, by the seers foretold
Of Juda's chosen race.

And chosen bearer of that Gift art thou!
Thy voice of greeting sounds:
The prophet-babe, regenerate even now,
Within his prison-bounds

Leaps, eager witness to the God in thee;
The God whose Spirit fills
Thy cousin too, and gives her words to free
The awe her bosom thrills.

III

And we, O Virgin-Mother — *we* have caught
Elizabeth's raptur'd strain:
Link'd with the salutation angel-taught,
Faith's evermore refrain.

We hail thee channel of all grace that flows
From Jesus' precious Blood;
And pray thee meet us in the joys and woes
Which shape our final good:

Until, at death, thou glad us with a smile
Shall bid our spirit sing
Thine own Magnificat — in peace the while
Awaiting Christ the King.

ALMA REDEMPTORIS MATER[1]

WE hail thee "Fostering Mother." For 'twas thine,
O blesséd among women, to become
The life of life's own Lord, while lay His home
Within thy maiden womb's inviolate shrine:
And when, those sweet months o'er, thou didst resign
Thy Treasure to the world of heathen Rome,
The Choirs whose carolling fill'd the starry dome
Saw feeding at thy breast the Babe divine!

[1] The Church's antiphon until the Purification.

But art thou not *our* "Alma Mater" too?
"*Our* life," as holy Church hath bid us say?
If Jesus by the Father lives, and we
By Him,[1] still, draw we not that life from thee?
Ah, nourish it within us — keep us true
To Him who is alone "the Life, the Way"!

TO OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR

ONE sang: "Oh, come to me, my love!"
And I
Did echo in my heart that song to thee.
For when, my Queen, thou standest sweetly nigh —
So real a presence that I all but see

Thy mantle blue, and, bending, seem to kiss
The soft white feet — I needs must long the more
To have thee always with me. And if this
Be joy for heav'n, and vainly hoped before,

[1] St. John, vi. 58.

Yet true it is thou hast a wondrous way
Of meeting thy belov'd ones even here:
As when they take their cross up day by day,
And forward go in faith and holy fear.

Ay, since thou camest once to meet thy Son,
That part remains thy tender office still:
For *we* must make that journey, one by one,
And thou *our* Mother art by His dear will.

So come to me, my Love, with morning's light,
To help me take my burden for the day;
But oh, abide with me till fall of night!
And then — to smile all evil things away!

Ah, when the hour, the moment, O my Mother,
Wherein I need thee *not?* But more in some:
For foes there are which closer press than other —
While thou dost seem afar. *Then*, dearest, come!

Come ever to the rescue, mighty Queen,
Until thou break upon me, from above,

Thro' death's cold mist, and let thy face be
seen —
Those gracious eyes — all-beautiful, my Love!

PER MARIAM

BE thou my prayer — by morn, by night,
And all day long!
My soul shall, lark-like, wing her flight,
On, up, into the perfect light,
With thee her song.

To muse upon thy joys, my Queen,
Is sweet repose:
But wiser still, for me, I ween,
To pore on sorrows deep and keen —
Thy peerless woes.

Those lovely lips have held their breath
At madden'd strife:
Those eyes have wept rejected faith,
And bravely look'd upon the Death
That gave us life.

That Heart, now restful evermore
In God's own peace,
Was once thrust through and wounded sore:
A wordless anguish at its core,
And no surcease.

Then let thy beauty hold me fast
In blissful chain:
A spell shall never break, but last
Till earth's fond dreams be overpast,
And naught remain

But love unblinded, joy all true —
Unsating feast.
Yet teach me *here* to sorrow too —
To rue the sins which thou didst rue,
Nor mine the least.

And teach me, dearest Mother, teach
My heart to prize
The science worldlings cannot reach —
The "folly" martyrs, virgins preach,
That maketh wise:

To love the Cross, for His dear sake
Who on it died:

To love it well, and daily take
My grace-fraught portion, and off shake
All care beside.

Be *thus* my prayer, by morn, by night,
And all day long:
That so my spirit wing her flight,
On, up, into the perfect light,
With thee her song.

STELLA MATUTINA: OR, A POET'S QUEST

INTRODUCTION

MY aim in the following poem is to show three things: —

First, the need of an *ideal womanhood*, not only as a model for her own sex, but as an object of love and reverence for ours.

Second, that this ideal must be a *reality*, and *part of a religious system*.

Third, that the Catholic and Roman Church, as having the only true and divine religion, gives us this ideal womanhood.

I take a representative male of the poetic temperament, — one whom Tennyson so truly describes as

"Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The *love of love*."

Such a being is peculiarly susceptible to the influence of woman, whether for good or for evil. I suppose him to lose his mother while still a boy; to be brought up in Protestantism,

therefore without a *Mother Church* to guide and preserve him in the dangerous years of youth. I suppose him to receive a classical education, and to come under the spell of the heathen mythology with its goddesses; of Homer and Virgil, of Ovid and Horace; to which fascination is presently added that of Byron and Moore, of Shelley and Keats. What wonder that the youth finds the thought of woman one which draws him away from the Sovereign Good, from the Infinite Beauty, which alone can fill his heart!

But I suppose him overtaken, on the threshold of manhood, by a wonderful grace from the Divine Mercy. He falls in love with womanly purity, and finds it a sacramental influence on his life. He begins to realize the truth of the noble words which Tennyson puts into the mouth of "the blameless King":—

> "For indeed I knew
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thoughts, and amiable words,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man."

And now his poetic nature idealizes, of course. It forms to itself an ideal womanhood. Can he find it, woo and wed it? Ah no! He soon discovers that it is something too high for that. His love has become *religion.* Then Christianity, if indeed divine, ought to furnish his ideal as an object of religious worship. But such Christianity as he has known can never give him that ideal. He envies the very pagans of Greece and Rome, who had Pallas and Diana among their divinities. What is he to do?

At this juncture, most happily, he remembers that the "Church of Rome" — of whose claim to be the only Church he is well aware — is accused of having corrupted Christianity with rites and cults borrowed from Paganism. So he has recourse to this ancient Church; questions her; receives a patient hearing; and finds, to his amazement and delight, that *she can* give him his ideal womanhood — only a far higher and lovelier one than any which his poetic fancy could have formed. He learns that this

> "Woman above all women glorified,
> Our tainted nature's solitary boast" —

as dear Wordsworth could say, in spite of his Protestant prejudices — has a claim on our homage as the Mother of God, and on our loving confidence as *our* Mother too; and, again, that he can make her the Queen of his heart, the Lady of his love, and consecrate his life to her service in the highest form of chivalrous devotion. Thus the "Poet's Quest" is ended.

I

I GREET thee, sober Autumn of life's year!
A heart-felt welcome thankfully I sing.
Little for me thy wonted look of sere:
I rather hail thee as a second Spring.
Thou hast not boyhood's freshness; dost not bring
Its rose and lily with their virgin hue:
Yet comest like a breeze of fragrant wing
From Eden wafted — breathing of a dew
That falls for evermore where God makes all things new.[1]

Ah, Eden! There's an echo in us all
To that sad story. Yea, through every clime

[1] Apoc. xxi. 5.

And age and creed some record of a Fall
We trace, some legend of a Golden Prime:
How fondly cherish'd in the lore sublime
Of Greece and Rome amid the lingering light!
The river's course, where most of weeds and slime,
Still here and there has gleams of pure and bright,
And bursts and wellings up that tell its native height.

'Tis thus, methinks, the individual life
Looks back to that fair morning of its day
When cloudless sky and sunny air were rife
With health and hope that promised no decay:
When the pure world within us could array
The world without in such a sweet untruth:
Ere pass'd our childish innocence away,
And left us wiser with a poison'd youth —
Of Eve's forbidden tree the pleasant fruit, in sooth.

And how we dote on childhood! Dote and weep
With such a tender yearning of regret,
Would seem some mystic consciousness asleep

At our soul's core, which may not all forget:
The hinting of a past we have not met
On earth, but which can hold us in its spell
Till the lip quivers and the cheek is wet:
Some fair, dream-haunting state, where all was well:
Some realm of Lethe-zoned Elysium, whence we fell.

Ay, fell. How clear *that* lesson from the past,
Ev'n to the school-boy with his musings wild!
And most, I ween, when memory turn'd aghast
To mourn in vain the bosom undefiled,
The guiltless loves and longings of the child:
How *then* 'twas blessèd freedom not to know;
And woman sweetliest in the mother smiled,
And seem'd a swordless angel placed to show
Where stands the Tree of Life — not that which beareth woe.

II

But manhood came at last; and, with it, grace
And mercy undeserv'd, and timely ruth.
Again the angel smil'd from woman's face;
But now led on thro' pureness unto truth.

And he that follow'd (deeming it, forsooth,
No bootless quest, for aught the common mind,
With wit sarcastic or with jest uncouth,
Might urge as wisdom) set himself to find
A fair ideal — for him, the queen of womankind.

And something he beheld of that he sought,
In many: much in few: but ah, in none
The perfect all!
Friends, guessing at his thought,
True-hearted spoke: "*Your* prize was never won.
You look too high. We live *beneath* the sun,
Frail mortals all and sinful. Nor, indeed,
Could we be happy for a sennight's run,
If wedded to perfection — we who need
The sympathy which chimes with penitential creed."

Then he: "You counsel sagely, but divine
Amiss. No longer question of a wife,
But rather of a higher love, is mine —
If higher you allow." "Ay, higher *life*,"
Quoth one — of "Oxford" leanings, and at strife

With all the rest — "or life and bride in one.
Enlist you, then, and march to drum and fife!
Join the brave few who have at last begun
With Church alone for spouse. It will be nobly done!"

But here the poet lightly laugh'd, and said:
"Your pardon, friend. No phantom spouse for me!
I seek a queen — to worship, not to wed:
One to be serv'd with purest chivalry."
"How!" scoff'd the other. "And no phantom *she?*
What mean you?" "This: that if Christ's Faith be true,
It needs must yield in full reality
The sweet ideal I have dared pursue.
Or . . . back to Pagan eld for taste of 'pastures new'!

"Yea, better again be Pantheist with the Greek;
Evolve me a new goddess, to combine
Each perfect womanly loveliness, and speak
My priestly vows at her symbolic shrine!"

"Such jest," rejoin'd his monitor, "is sign
Of levity profane." "Nay, jest afar!
A love which is religion . . . this of mine . . .
Is born of truth, not bred as fancies are.
Tho' yet unseen the day, I hail the Morning
Star!"

III

Then turn'd the poet, with all-reverent mind,
To fields he had been early taught to shun:
Where poison-flowers ('twas said) perfume the
wind,
And musical, but deadly, waters run.
"The old idolatry still lives, my son,
In those fair-seeming gardens. Ah, beware!
A sorceress woos thee with her names of
'One'
And 'Catholic' and 'Holy.' Flee the snare!
Ev'n as thy fathers fled to breathe pure Gospel
air."

Rear'd in the great Elizabethan Sham,
His creed had well-nigh dwindled to a
ghost. . . .
Now fed with mist of Isis or of Cam,

Now left to cater for itself and boast
The right of choosing what it favor'd most
And tranquilly dispensing with the rest.[1]
Yet like a sentinel he kept his post
For faith in Christ — the Master highest, best,
And Blessèd Saviour-God of fallen race confess'd.

So now unto the old historic Church
He turn'd him blithely: glad that he had heard
Her unquench'd voice still challenge earnest search,
With claim (no longer to his thirst absurd)
To teach inerrantly Christ's living Word.

[1] It may sound very harsh to call the Anglican Establishment "The great Elizabethan Sham." But truth often is unpleasant. I heard the late eminent convert, T. W. Marshall (author of "Christian Missions"), remark that "the Established Church of England and her daughter in America were the two *most respectable shams* on the face of the earth." Now that an infallible decision from the Chair of Peter has forever settled the nullity of Anglican Orders, the above fact is more strikingly apparent.

As to what I call "mist of Isis or of Cam," what else but "mist" — or fog, if you prefer it — is the private judgment theology of the Anglican clergy? If the high-church section are doing service *now* by preaching borrowed dogma, this is something to be thankful for indeed.

"O ancient Church, I hear thee charged," he said
"(A charge, 'twould seem, right learnedly preferr'd),
With bringing back the worship of the dead,
And heathen hero-rites — now paid to Saints instead."

But she, with gentle dignity, replied:
"My child, was never a more foolish lie.
What are the Saints? Christ's members glorified.
He gives them crowns and sceptres: what can I
But do them fitting homage? There, on high,
They share His very throne, and so complete
The triumph of His own Humanity:
For doth not each His victory repeat
Over the rebel hosts that writhe beneath His feet?

"What are the Saints? My sons and daughters, borne
To Christ my Spouse. Dost think them gone before

To let their Mother toil and weep forlorn,
Nor rather help and comfort her the more?
If I, then, bid my children here implore
The timely aid of brethren strong in prayer,
Who watch the vessel from the hard-won shore
And beacon into port — what tongue shall dare
This cult with impious rites of demon-gods compare?"

IV

"Not mine," quoth he. "The charge was never mine.
But hearing now the answer clear and keen,
Methinks I catch the Master's voice in thine —
Authoritative, luminous, serene.
Oh, tell me if the vision I have seen
Be found among thy daughters throned above?
If one be there — my heart's ideal queen —
Whom I may choose not vainly for my love,
And chivalrously serve — as thy wise laws approve?"

"If true as fair the ideal thy fancy paints,
'Tis real, be sure, in yonder world. But thou

Within the great communion of Saints
Must first enroll thee, child, and humbly bow
To faith's whole teaching." . . . "Mother, teach me now!"
And all his soul went out to her. But she,
To test him more, made answer: "I allow
In this request thy full sincerity;
But dread some fever'd craze of sensuous fantasy.

"What is this 'vision' thou hast found so good —
This fond 'ideal'? And whither doth it lead?
'Twould seem some type of fairest womanhood,
Whereof thy youthful poet heart hath need,
As now it thinks: yet wherefore? But to feed
Self-worship and a pride forever blind?
If so, my child, 'tis outcome of a greed
That is but sensuality refined.
The spiritual garb ill veils the carnal mind.

"Nor may we rest in creatures as an end,
How pure they be soever. God alone
Our All-in-all, to Him should ever tend
The heart's affections — most, if it enthrone
(His gift acknowledged) an elected *One*,

As dearest after Him. *Then*, like a grace,
Our love leads upward."
"Such a love mine own,"
Broke in the poet meekly. "I can trace
Its dawn within my soul to one sweet woman's face —

"My mother's. Yet, of purity severe,
That face smiled rarely. To my boyish thought,
When I had lost her, less of love than fear
Clung round her memory. But my heart had caught
A hunger — that soon grew, and gnaw'd, and wrought
Into my life — for what she would have been:
For what the years (so seem'd it) must have brought:
A perfect mother, ruling like a queen
With chaste and gentle sway o'er passion's young demesne."

V

"Poor child, hadst thou but known! . . . But mothers age,
However sweet, and pass: sons woo and wed.

Comes other love to help man's virtue wage
The holy war." "To me it came," he said:
"Alas! not day's first blush of rosy red;
Yet with a promise of baptismal dew,
To cleanse my spirit from the past, and shed
A freshness o'er it — not of youth, but new,
And potent with a pledge of manhood strong and true.

"All this I hoped to find in wedded love;
And form'd me an ideal wife. But soon
My heart became, like Galahad's, 'drawn above,'
And craved (nor seem'd it rash) a higher boon
Than mortal bride. One summer afternoon,
I spoke with trusted friends: but all and each
Or thought me struck with madness from the moon,
Or moping for some charmer out of reach;
And so they miss'd the music I had long'd to teach.

"The mother had absorb'd the wife, to form
My queen-ideal — perfected womanhood:
No cold abstraction, but a being warm
With all of deepest love and highest good

In sister, spouse, and mother: one who stood
'Mid joys and sorrows here, and now, in heaven,
Is crown'd with youth immortal.
But I would,
O Church, I had known thee sooner! Have I striven,
All blindly and in vain? Is much to be forgiven?"

"Thy mother, then, this 'vision,' this 'ideal,'
O poet! It is well. I see the Hand
Hath led thee to the threshold of the Real
By one sure path thy heart could understand.
Not rash the hope that in the Promised Land
Thy mother dwells already with the blest;
Yet must our lov'd ones pay the full demand
Of justice ere they enter into rest;
And till we *know* them there, to pray is ever best

"As mindful of their need. (If need be none,
Love earns not less requital.) The bright names
I call upon — my children who have won
The honors meet which heresy defames —

Their saintship 'tis the King Himself proclaims
By proofs infallible.
But let me show
This eager soul of thine, which worthily aims
So high, a 'queen-ideal' thou dost not know —
A Womanhood that leaves all other far below."

VI

As one long absent, who is nearing home
But off his road, a voice that points the way,
So heard our poet the kind Church of Rome,
Since first she spoke, thro' all her patient say.
And ever, as he listen'd, grew the ray
Of faith within his mind; till now it seem'd
About to brighten into perfect day:
Only not paled his Morning Star, but beam'd
A larger loveliness — a joy he had not dream'd!

"Give thanks, my son. A precious grace and rare
Hath drawn thee to esteem whate'er is found
In womanhood most God-like chiefly fair.
The mother-love, whose tender ways surround

The child, nor less befittingly abound
When other fails the man — this first compels
Thy homage; and, in sooth, 'tis holy ground:
But need I doubt, for thee, the lily dwells
In maiden bower — for thee, the virginal charm
excels?

"Thy smile assures me. Thou canst follow, then.
If God, all-wise, has form'd not man alone,
But woman — as the Spirit-guided pen
Hath writ — but equally woman, to His own
Image and likeness, and in her is shown,
More than in man, parental love divine;
Not less thro' virgin woman makes He known —
To eyes of chaster worship, such as thine —
A pearl of greater price the mother must resign.

"Now God Himself, while fruitful, virgin is.
If virgin, then, with mother could unite
In woman, *there* were beauty likest His:
That Womanhood would wear a crown of light,
As 'queen-ideal' for men and angels' sight.

And know'st thou not, O poet — hast not heard —
There *is* a Virgin-Mother? Has the blight
Of fatal error, guiltlessly incurr'd,
So dull'd thy finer sense to ev'n the Written Word?"

"Nay, Mistress: I believe in Christ our Lord,
Born of the Virgin Mary." "Ay, and He?"
"The Son of God." "Or God the Son, adored
As Second of the Consubstantial Three?"
"Yea, verily." "Then, His Mother . . what is she?
Mother of God?" "'Twould seem so." "Seem, forsooth!
Is here no place for seeming. But to me
The nebulous half-gospel taught thy youth
Has long familiar been. Now learn the fuller truth."

VII

"All ears," he answer'd. "But of her, indeed,
Sweet thoughts would come in boyhood: as at times,

With lesson from Saint Luke, or say of Creed:
Oftener when peal'd the merry Christmas chimes,
And Bethlehem's tale in carols, pictures, rhymes,
Took clearer shape. But soon wiseacres said
That none, O Church, of all thy many crimes,
Surpass'd the idolatrous worship madly paid
To heathen goddess fused with Nazareth's lowly Maid.

"Erst Cybele 'mother of the gods,' 'twas now
Mary the 'Mother of God.'"
"Ay, ay, my child:
And sorry dupes were they. No more so thou,
Through His dear mercy who, an Infant, smiled
On Christmas morn to Mother undefiled,
God born in time: born to destroy the crew
Of demon-godships with their orgies wild:
Born to set up a worship pure and true —
A kingdom rich for all in treasures 'old and new.'

"Of treasures old how bountiful a store
From Moses to the Prophets! Light to light

Succeeding: endless mines of golden lore:
And heav'n-taught poesy's sublimest flight.
But those who scan the sacred page aright
Will find the promised Woman with her Seed
Prefigur'd o'er and o'er to mystic sight.
Fathers and doctors mine have lov'd to feed
Their contemplation thus . . . as, haply, thou shalt read

"In luminous tomes ere long.
Of treasures new
Still ampler store have I: nor letter'd page
Alone: for here is equal honor due
The Word Unwrit, which flows from age to age
(And shall to the last, for all that Hell may rage)
Inviolate, Apostolical, Divine.
But whosoe'er would hear it, and assuage
His thirst for truth, must docile ear incline
To one unchanging Voice — one only . . . which is mine.

"But gift of gifts the King Himself, the 'Word Made Flesh' to 'dwell among us,' evermore:

'Emmanuel, God with us.' (Thou hast heard
How well His martyr-prophet sang of yore ?)[1]
And next, the Virgin who conceiv'd and bore
Is precious to my love. Through her alone
He came to us. Elected from before
All ages she, and form'd His ownest own:
His Covenant's spotless Ark, His Wisdom's Mercy-Throne."

VIII

"Ah me!" the poet murmur'd, full of awe:
"I scarce may smile. For while, no longer blind,
I see a fairer Eve than Milton saw —
The veritable Queen of womankind;
Yet dare I venture with presumptuous mind
To more than fondly worship from afar?
And tho' in serving her I needs must find
Exceeding joy, one missing note will mar
The hoped-for harmony — one brightness leave the Star!

[1] Is. vii. 14.

"My Queen, my Lady, she: but not my Mother!
God's Mother — never mine!"
"Still blind, then, thou!
For prithee, is not Christ our first-born Brother?
His Father not our Father? Tell me, how
Are we His brethren — as Saint John saith, 'now
The sons of God'[1] — yet may not claim withal
His Mother for our own? Ah, gladden'd brow!
I see that tender brightness o'er thee fall
Thou fearedest gone: her light whom we too love to call

"The 'Stella Matutina.'
Come with me
To Bethlehem's stable-cave. And while we bend
In loving homage to the Blessed Three —
The Babe, His Virgin-Mother, and the Friend
So tried and true, in whom the honors blend
Of spouse and father — take thy rightful place
Where Jesus lies: and show me to what end

[1] 1 John, iii. 2.

Art thou His brother — by adoption's grace
Co-heir, as saith Saint Paul, to suffer a brief space,

" And then to reign in glory — if for thee
Mary and Joseph no such office share
As here for Him? If born in Him, and He
Not less in thee, thou needest all the care
Of that sweet Mother with her wealth of prayer
To have the Christ-life in thee thrive and grow."
" But how," exclaim'd the poet, " may I dare
Believe that she can love a thing so low,
Or prize what my poor heart must tremblingly bestow? "

" Thine a most natural wonder," said the Church,
" At what, in sooth, nigh takes a mortal's breath.
But one thing baffles more our deepest search:
How *He* could love us even unto death?
Yet of all mysteries none so dear to faith.
So, let us now to Calvary — to ' the mount
Of myrrh, the hill of frankincense,' as saith
Th' enamour'd Spouse. On that perennial fount
Of hope, a tale will I, to thee still new, recount."

IX

"Still new! Have I not conn'd it o'er and o'er?"
"I doubt not thou hast ponder'd it," she said,
"As page of that half-gospel now no more.
But tell me: whensoever thou hast read
Or listen'd — though the Saviour's Wounds have bled
In thy mind's picture, and each dying word
Made lingering echoes, till the thorn-crown'd head
Droopt lifeless — hath not *one* thing thou hast heard,
One utterance of the seven, seem'd out of place, and stirr'd

"No answering pulse, as meaningless to *thee?*
'Behold thy Mother!' spake the lips divine —
To that belovèd One in whom we see
The nascent Church. Would Jesus but consign
To filial care, as heretics opine,
This Queen of virgins, this Immaculate Eve?
Or did He give her to be mine and thine —

As I and mine *know*, rather than believe,
From sweet innumerous proofs that never can deceive?

"What! Silent? Nay, that tear is eloquent
Where speech would fail; and merits that I show
Why stands she there with bosom pierced and rent —
Why has not death forestall'd the cruel woe.
Alas, the new Eve, like the old, must know
Full partnership in sorrow with her Lord!
In anguish bringing forth: each mother-throe
United with His Passion: hers the Sword,
As His the Cross: that so they work with one accord

"Redemption's plan. And He, thy King and Brother,
With love's true thought hath waited for this hour
To make her doubly, by His gift, thy Mother:
That never mayst thou doubt her tender power

With His rich mercy; nor her own Heart's dower
Of perfect love, which brims and overflows
For His dear sake. In her the very 'Tower
Of David' thou shalt find against thy foes:
Nor less the 'Enclosèd Garden' of a blest repose.

"But ah, how many dare reject this gift
Of Mary — knowing better than the King
His honor and their need! One day to lift
Sad eyes to Him in vain! Imagining
Her mediation such a worthless thing!
Is He, then, less our God because our Brother —
Our Judge because our Saviour? Can we cling
Too trustfully to her, our common Mother,
Whose prayer His mercy holds more surely than all other?"

X

"Eureka!" cried the poet. "She is mine!
My quest is o'er. I knew 'twas not a dream.
But is it twilight yet? Or why doth shine

My Morning Star with still increasing
beam?"
"Not day, my child. We walk by twilight's
gleam
While pilgrims here. The Vision will be day:
The Vision Beatific, where the Stream
Of Life hath source — though not so far away
But heav'n-sent breezes waft us drops of the
crystal spray.

"But fear not for thy Star when day shall
reign;
For where her Son is King, there Queen is
she:
And thou shalt know thou hast not lov'd in vain
The fairest fair of creatures that can be.
The peerless beauty thou dost yearn to see
Is there ev'n now — assumed to Jesus' side.
Conceiv'd Immaculate, and wholly free
From sin's inheritance, she had not died
Save to enhance Humility's triumph over Pride."

"Then I may take her for my own heart's
Queen —
My creature love of loves! Nor need I pray

For grace preventive, lest she come between
My soul and God, alluring it astray —
As 'tis with earth-born passions of a day.
But will she make my Saviour less to me —
As grave-faced teachers of my youth would say?"
"Not less, but more. What teacher can there be
Of Jesus' love like her through whom He came to thee?

"What bond so safe, so tender, could unite
His Heart with thine? The more thou lovest her,
The dearer groweth He — known, lov'd aright:
For she the Way to Him where none can err,
Th' Immaculate Way He did Himself prefer
To every other when He came from heav'n.
'Hail, full of grace!' said *then* His messenger
(A chosen Prince from out the Presence Seven):
'With thee the Lord,' said he — while yet unask'd, ungiven

" The virginal consent that saved mankind.
If then so full of grace, what now the store?
If with her then our God, where seek and find
So surely now . . . her Son for evermore?
Thou thinkest thou hast known thy Lord before,
And prov'd His sweetness. Taste again, and see.
A new wine waits in cup that runneth o'er,
And Food of angels — all prepar'd for thee.
Who bids thee to the feast? Thy Mother — it is she!"

XI

Thrice blessèd hour that gave him " Welcome Home"
(Of all remember'd moments dearer none)!
When knelt the poet to sweet Mistress Rome,
His new faith learnt, his anxious journey done.
For him a fresh existence had begun:
He seem'd to stand on some enchanted shore,
Where life had other meanings than the one

So thought-confusing he had known before,
And bred a sense of peace that grew from more
to more.

He read again the pages lov'd of old,
The Sacred Volume — now indeed divine.
Oh, how harmonious now the tale they told!
With what clear depths he saw the waters
shine!
And ever through them, to his raptur'd eyne,
Look'd queenfully the mirror'd Star of Morn —
Since first, o'er sad farewells of palm and
pine,
She rose on forfeit Eden's pair forlorn,
To when, 'mid angels' song, the Saviour-Child
was born.

How new seem'd Bethlehem's story! Newer
still
The lore that crowns more favor'd Nazareth —
Where, at the "Fiat" of His Handmaid's will,
Th' Incomprehensible took bonds of breath!
And, after, "subject" dwelt, the Evangel
saith,
To Mary and to Joseph — yet their God!

Born to "become obedient unto death,"
Ev'n then, in that dear home, the path He trod
Which led to Golgotha's Blood-consecrated sod!

"For me, then, this obedience; and for me
The pattern, first and last!" the poet cried.
"In the soul's Nazareth let me dwell with thee,
O Blessèd Mother! Keep me by thy side.
And since I must, like Him, be crucified,
Come with me as I bear my cross, and take
The place where thou didst stand when Jesus died.
'To me to live is Christ,' so thou but make
My rescued years thy care and guard them for His sake."

Our Lady smiled; and gently led him on
Up to an altar, where a bride, arrayed
In spotless white — Saint Joseph and Saint John
On either hand — was waiting. Then she said:
"If thou dost love me, prove it undismay'd.
Receive my daughter for thy sister-spouse —
Herself a virgin-mother. Thou hast pray'd

To serve me with thy life. Here plight thy vows.
And trust me for the wreath shall grace my poet's brows."

XII

A dream, yet not a dream. The Gates of Faith
Had open'd on a Temple old and vast,
Where naught unreal may bide — though many a wraith
Of fond illusion, soon or late out-cast,
Doth haunt the entrance.
As the poet pass'd
From court to court, he ask'd the Temple's name.
But she who led him spoke not, till, at last —
The Bridal Group! And then, for answer, came
Only the light which glow'd in the altar's rosy flame.

The Temple of Vocation! Sore afraid,
He would have fled; but met that smile, and heard

"If thou dost love me, prove it undismay'd."
How eagerly he drank each gracious word,
That glow'd like wine within the soul it stirr'd
To holy daring! "Yes, my Queen — for thee!
Full well thou knowest how thy servant err'd
In pardon'd years. But be it far from me
To doubt that, knowing this, my surety thou wilt be."

The Bride . . . no child of heresy and schism;
No phantom, like the one refused with scorn;
But she whom gift of Pentecostal Chrism
With fadeless youth and beauty did adorn:
Christ's Sister-Spouse — of His own Heart-wound born
And Mary's Dolors. But her face unveil'd,
While learning from her of his Star of Morn,
The poet had not seen. Not strange he fail'd
To guess its music then, nor rapturously hail'd

A hidden loveliness of blended youth
And chastity and wisdom with the peace

Which ever tends the majesty of Truth:
But, gazing now, he felt all tremor cease;
Nor now, I ween, had welcomed a release
From such espousals. And Our Lady's face,
At every stolen glance, did so increase
His love for her and trust in God's dear grace,
He thought no more of self — still fickle, weak,
and base.

So gave the Church her hand. Her angel clad
Our poet with the Priesthood which is Christ.
The taken Cross, he bears it ever glad;
For his the portion which his Lord sufficed:
And spurns what worldlings covet, unenticed
Toward woes to be by fleeting joys that are;
For his the joys not fleeting, gains unpriced:
While — sweetly, calmly mirror'd from afar —
Within his deepest soul shines on . . . the
Morning Star.

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